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*Autumn • 1958*


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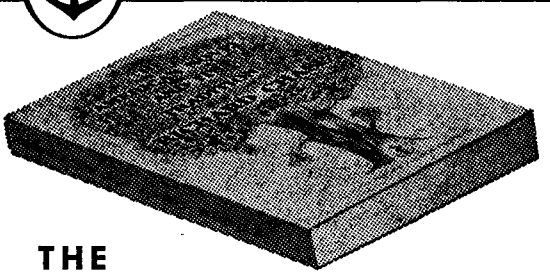

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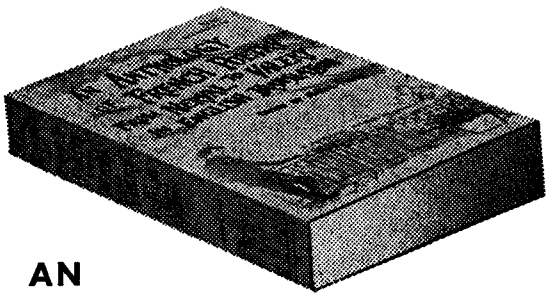

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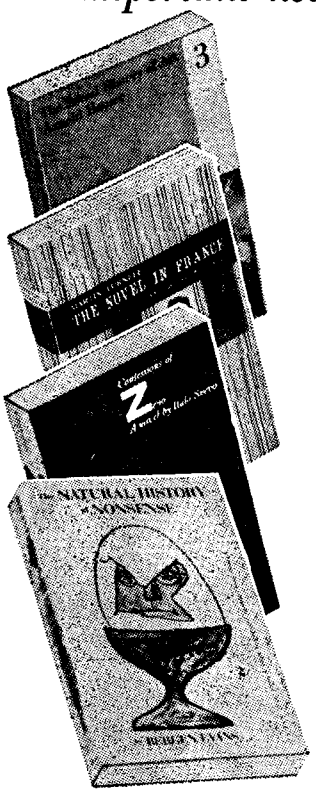


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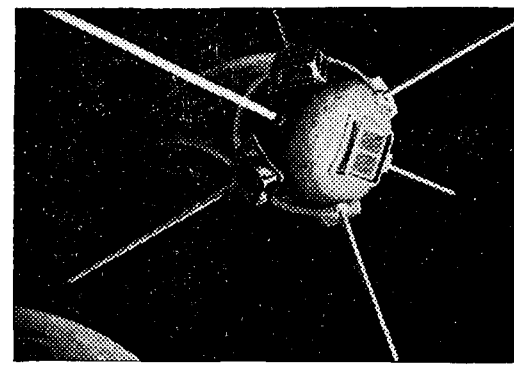

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THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR

VOLUME 27 *Autumn, 1958* NUMBER 4

# THE INVASION OF PRIVACY (1)

## Technology and the Claims of Community

RICHARD H. ROVERE

IT IS REPEATEDLY ASSERTED BY SOLICITOUS GROUPS and individuals that the right of privacy—described once by Mr. Justice Brandeis as the "right to be let alone . . . the most comprehensive of rights and the right most valued by civilized men"—is in sorry shape in this Republic today. The evidence is impressive. Wire tapping is epidemic; even where it is illegal, it flourishes, and some authorities believe that the number of telephones being monitored on any given day runs into the hundreds of thousands. "Bugging," the use of concealed electronic devices by absentee eavesdroppers, is an almost universal practice among policemen, private detectives, and both public and private investigators. People describing themselves as "investigators" are as numerous and as pestiferous, it often seems, as flies in late September. Each day, more and more of us are

RICHARD H. ROVERE is a writer on the staff of the *New Yorker* and United States correspondent of the *London Spectator*. He is also a member of the Editorial Board of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR and the author of three books, the most recent being *Affairs of State: The Eisenhower Years*.

This article is the first in a SCHOLAR series devoted to discussion of the invasion of privacy.



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required to tell agencies of government more and more about ourselves; and each melancholy day, government agencies are telling more and more about us. Someone in the F.B.I.—not Mr. Hoover, certainly, but someone—slips a "raw" file to a favored congressman; the President instructs the Bureau of Internal Revenue to turn over income tax returns to an investigating committee; the Defense Department gives medical records to an insurance adjuster. The existence of the files, apart from their disclosure, may itself be regarded as a violation of privacy; we are compelled to leave bits and pieces of ourselves in many places where we would just as soon not be.

Broadly speaking, invasions of privacy are of two sorts, both on the increase. There are those, like wire tapping and bugging and disclosure of supposedly confidential documents, that could conceivably be dealt with by changes in law or public policy. Then there are those that appear to be exercises of other rights—for example, freedom of speech, of the press, of inquiry. A newspaper reporter asks an impertinent personal question; the prospective employer of a friend wishes to know whether the friend has a happy sex life; a motivational researcher wishes to know what we have against Brand X deodorant; a magazine wishing to lure more advertisers asks us to fill out a questionnaire on our social, financial and intellectual status. Brandeis' "right to be let alone" is unique in that it can be denied us by the powerless as well as by the powerful —by a teen-ager with a portable radio as well as by a servant of the law armed with a subpoena.

Most of those who publicly lament the decline of privacy talk as if they believe that the causes are essentially political; they seem to feel that enemies of individual rights are conspiring to destroy privacy just as certain of them have sought, in recent years, to destroy the right to avoid self-incrimination. Some also see privacy eroding as a consequence of a diminishing respect for it. I think there may be something in both points, although a good deal less in the first than in the second; but it seems to me that the really important causes lie elsewhere—in our advancing technology and in the growing size and complexity of our society. Until the early part of this century, the right of privacy was seldom invoked. Though its



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broadest and most binding guarantee is in the Fourth Amendment to the Constitution, which affirms "the right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects" and prohibits unreasonable searches and seizures, it was not until 1905 that a court squarely upheld the right of privacy. The jurisdiction was Georgia, and the court laid it down as a common-law proposition that "the right of privacy has its foundations in the instincts of nature." In a thinly populated land, with government touching only lightly on the everyday lives of citizens and with a technology so primitive that people had to depend on their own eyes and ears to know what others were up to, men armed with the Fourth Amendment and with the squirrel gun permitted them under the Second Amendment could pretty well attend to their own privacy. Mostly, one supposes, it was not thought of as a "right" to be protected but as a condition of life cherished by some and merely accepted by others.

But then came the camera, the telephone, the graduated income tax, and later the tape recorder, the behavioral scientist, television (now being used to follow us as we move about supermarkets and department stores as a kind of radar for the light-fingered), the professional social worker, "togetherness" and a host of other developments that are destructive of privacy as a right and as a condition. Soundproofing is the only technological contribution I can think of that has been an aid to the right to be let alone. The rest have lent themselves to invasions of privacy, and the end is not yet in sight. Wire tapping, for example, is now in the process of being fully automated; where formerly the number of wires that could be tapped was limited by the number of personnel that could be assigned to sitting around all day waiting for a conversation to intercept, today innumerable phones can be monitored entirely by machines. Someday, no doubt, we shall be spied upon from space platforms equipped with television cameras. And all this time the welfare state has been developing—in the main, of course, as a response to technology. It may be that a disrespect for privacy has been on the increase, too, but what is certain is that those of a trespassing inclination are infinitely better equipped today and have infinitely more excuses for their incursions. I rather think this is the essential thing, for I believe that if the Georgia court was correct in saying



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that the "instincts of nature" provided foundations for the right of privacy, the same thing may also be cited as a source of motive power for those who assume the right to violate privacy. Was it not Senator McCarthy who screamed bloody murder when the Post Office Department ran a "mail cover" on his correspondence? (In a mail cover, postal officials do not open mail but examine envelopes and wrappings with a view to learning the identity of a victim's correspondents.) No doubt his outrage was as genuine as it was noisy. There is a hermit spirit in each of us, and also a snooper, a census taker, a gossipmonger and a brother's keeper.

Technology has forced the surrender of a measure of privacy in many different ways. It may be a man's business whether he drinks or not, but if he wishes to drive a car or fly an airplane or perform brain operations, society's need to inquire into his drinking habits must surely override his right to privacy in this serious matter. Government is society's instrument in such affairs, and the more responsibilities we saddle it with, the more we require it to take a hand in our lives. If we wish it to protect us against quacks, frauds, swindlers, maniacs and criminals, we must give it powers of prosecution, punishment and licensing. We can be reasonably certain that its tendency will be to go too far (the American Civil Liberties Union reports with distress that in some places tile layers must now be licensed by public authority), but we may—indeed, it seems to me that most of us do—judge its excesses to be less dangerous than complete laissez faire or laissez passer. Technology has made us all a great deal more dependent upon one another than we ever were in the past and necessarily, therefore, less able to protect our own privacy. Once we could labor alone—now there is a division of labor which relates my work to yours. Once we traveled alone—now our mobility is collectivized, and while we have a legitimate concern over the habits of the man at the controls, whose private life we find it necessary to investigate, we also constitute ourselves a captive audience and a group of hostages to those in whom the instincts of nature that lead to compulsive trespassing are more powerful than those that make sometime recluses of us all.

In my view, which may be eccentric, it gains us nothing to denounce J. Edgar Hoover or those who descend to what Mr. Justice



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Holmes called the "dirty business" of wire tapping—or even to expend rhetoric on the death of solitude in our kind of civilization, as William Faulkner now and then does when he feels himself affronted by the attentions of the press. If there is any way at all out of the fish bowl, it will be found only by facing some hard facts of life today. For one thing, there is no stopping the technology that extends our senses by wires and waves and electrical impulses. For another, it is difficult—if, indeed, it is possible—to distinguish, morally and practically, between the use of these devices and the use of the senses unaided. I think that wire tapping is a dirty business, but I am not sure that I can find much logic to support my belief so long as I am willing to countenance the older, unmechanized ways by which society apprehends criminals. What is the moral difference between tapping a telephone wire and straining one's ears to overhear a conversation believed by the participants to be private? What is the moral difference between putting an ear to a keyhole and bugging a room? Or between using any and all bugging devices and planting spies and informers in the underworld? Or between carrying a concealed tape recorder to an interview and carrying a concealed plan to commit to memory as much of the talk as the memory can retain? Society needs detectives, or so at least I believe, and the means they employ have never been lovely and have almost always involved the violation of privacy.

So far as morality is concerned, I doubt if a valid distinction can be made between primitive and advanced techniques. But a practical distinction can be made, and in fact has been made (wire tapping *is* either outlawed or restricted by law in every American jurisdiction), and the rationale is not very different from that which proscribes mechanical devices in most sports. Whether or not wire tapping is dirty business in the Holmesian sense, it is dirty pool, and this applies, or soon will, one suspects, to most other gadgets. It may be no more immoral than other means used for the same end—any more than killing with thermonuclear weapons is more immoral than killing with a club—but somehow the advantage it gives to the police side is offensive to sportsmanship, and the numbers that can be bagged by automated spying, like the numbers that can be killed by a hydrogen bomb, make it seem more of-



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fensive to our humanity. Against this, it can be argued that crime and subversion have also benefited by science and that their adversaries should not have to fight a horse cavalry war against them. But the fact of the matter is that it is not narcotics peddlers whose privacy has been more efficiently violated by the use of the new techniques; the net has not been drawn tighter against society's enemies—it has simply been spread for a larger catch. And here another practical distinction can be made, even though a moral one comes hard. It is one thing to deceive and trap a dope pusher by almost any means available, and quite another to tap the phone of, let us say, a philanthropic foundation on the chance of turning up a relationship between it and some citizen of a heretical turn of mind. To be sure, the underworld members of the Apalachin rally have every bit as much right to privacy as Robert M. Hutchins. But the law in its wisdom has found a way to draw a line between the two without denying their equality; this is the doctrine of "probable cause," embodied as the condition for seizure and arrest in the same Fourth Amendment that keeps most of us out of the broad net of policemen merely fishing for evidence in our homes and among our papers and effects.

It seems to me that it is by no means too late for law and public policy to deal with violations of privacy that are undertaken by zealous guardians of the peace and the public order. In all probability, wire tapping and the many forms of bugging can never be wholly eliminated, even where they are outlawed and the penalties for their use are severe; they suit the police mentality too well, and they may be easily employed without fear of detection. Moreover, there are circumstances in which even the most ardent civil libertarians would be forced to approve their use. But the third degree and the rubber truncheon also suit the police mentality, and free societies have managed to reduce their use to a point where they are not regarded as essential characteristics of the machinery of law enforcement. Probable cause, with high standards for the determination of probability, would seem a basic safeguard against present excesses. Another would be an extension of the rule of the inadmissibility of wire-tap evidence; this, of course, is the rule in the federal courts today, and it has not stopped the F.B.I. and God



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knows how many other government agencies from tapping wires in the hope of learning where admissible evidence may be turned up. But there is no reason why the rule of inadmissibility might not be strengthened in such a way as to give ordinary criminal defendants a chance at acquittals and reversals whenever the prosecution's case has been made by playing dirty pool. The police, like merchants, do not care for profitless ventures, and somewhere, no doubt, there is a point at which most of the profit can be taken out of the indiscriminate wire tapping and bugging that is being employed today. Mr. Justice Murphy used to say that there was no means of preserving the liberties of citizens so efficacious as making the denial of those liberties disadvantageous to the police power.

Nothing will be done, however, along this line unless a certain amount of public pressure builds up against a catch-as-catch-can view of law enforcement and in defense of the right of privacy. And even if abuses of the police power were checked, we would be left with all those invasions that are the work not of the police power, but of other public authorities and of a multitude of private ones. Here, as I see it, we encounter problems far knottier than those posed by technology in the service of law and order. We were willed a social order dedicated to the sovereignty of the individual but, again thanks mainly to technology, dependent for its functioning largely on the interdependence of lives. My behavior affects my neighbor in a hundred ways undreamed of a century ago. My home is joined to his by pipes and cables, by tax and insurance rates. If my labor is not immediately dependent on his, it is on that of other men down the street and across the continent. When I move about, my life is at my neighbor's mercy—and his, of course, at mine. I may build a high fence, bolt the doors, draw the blinds and insist that my time to myself is mine alone, but his devices for intrusion are limitless. My privacy can be invaded by a ringing telephone as well as by a tapped one. It can be invaded by an insistent community that seeks to shame me into getting up off my haunches to do something for the P.T.A. or town improvement or the American Civil Liberties Union—possibly, for this worthy organization, making a survey of invasions of privacy. My "right to be let alone" is a right I may cherish and from time to time in-



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voke, but it is not a right favored by the conditions of the life I lead and am, by and large, pleased to be leading. If I were to think of it as any sort of absolute right, I would be as blind to the world about me as those who used to believe that the United States could assert and by itself defend its right to be let alone. No kind of sovereignty has ever been absolute, but in the last century or so the decline has been staggering.

The meaningful invasions that are a consequence of the condition of our lives are, to be sure, those undertaken more or less in the name of the whole community: by organs of government other than the police, by the press, by education, by business. Against them, the law can offer few defenses without denying other freedoms and committing new invasions of privacy. The press has a right to describe Nathan Leopold's release from prison; whether it will exercise that right in the face of eloquent pleas not to do so is a matter of conscience and taste. In general, our rule is that those who lead part of their lives in public—politicians, entertainers, writers and others, including celebrated criminal defendants, who court the public favor in one way or another—have forfeited the right to invoke the common-law doctrine that "a person who unreasonably and seriously interferes with another's interest in not having his affairs known to others . . . is liable to the other." In England, Randolph Churchill may raise the roof because the press is, in his view, too nosey about the private life of Princess Margaret, but here there would be no one to defend the proposition that the press and public should be kept in the dark about the President's health, as the British public was once kept in the dark about the health of Randolph Churchill's father. And the same tests of public interest and relevance that apply in the community of the nation apply in every subcommunity. To a degree, we can control our privacy by controlling our mode of existence, and if we can never retain anything like complete mastery, we can at least attempt an approach to it. But the costs are heavy and to many, probably most, Americans excessive.

It is common for Europeans to say that privacy will die in America because we care nothing about it. "An American has no sense of privacy," Bernard Shaw wrote. "He does not know what



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it means. There is no such thing in the country." Foreigners frequently profess to be scandalized by American institutions that seem to them destructive of the very idea of privacy—the standard sleeping car, for instance, and the now ubiquitous portable radio. Alistair Cooke has said that while in England good manners consist in not intruding oneself upon others, here they consist in being tolerant of those who lead their private life in public and remain a good sport about all noisy intrusions. I think the differences are real but insignificant. The British may piously talk of the royal family's right to privacy, but their gutter press makes more lives miserable than ours does. The French set great store by privacy, but they allow their police a license that Americans would never tolerate. (The French police operate on the theory that their work would be quite impossible if they were not allowed to run mail covers, ransack telegraph files and tap wires.) We are perhaps the most gregarious and community-minded of people and have developed social and technological interdependence further than any other, but it is still, I think, universally acknowledged that the man who tells another to "mind your own business" has justice on his side and speaks the common law. We are all in the same fix, and we all have to strike the same balance between our need for others and our need for ourselves alone.



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# *A Pertinent Observation*

RUTHVEN TODD

Thinking of summer in these days of fall
Legend and personal myth slip newly into place
And shocked recognition can suddenly recall
A pertinence of her I had no chance to face:

And, half asleep, I start to realize
That, trapped in ancient hell, Eurydice's eyes,
Wide with the pain of burgeoning surprise,
Were bluer than the burnished Grecian skies,

So that, in the winter of the sullen cave
(Even though he had turned to meet her gaze)
Her opening lids at morning waking gave
A semblance of summer to the dismal days.

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# Basic Elements in the New World Crisis

ADOLF A. BERLE, JR.

THE PAST FIFTY YEARS, including the present time, take historical rank as an unexampled period of world struggle. In one form or another the entire planet has been at war, hot or cold, since 1914. The thesis here presented is that this period of struggle has not been, and is not now, a formless chaos of anarchic conflict. I believe it is, in essence, a vast, somewhat confused, but yet traceable struggle toward order and toward life.

Study of the fundamental rather than the surface currents below the spate of military and diplomatic struggles suggests that most parts of the world are being driven into active, often violent, contact with most other parts of the world in at least four distinct ways. All are familiar: they need therefore merely be mentioned.

The first of these forces is unquestionably economic. Since roughly the turn of the twentieth century, all save the most primitive countries have increasingly depended for their economic life on ability to exchange goods and services for goods and services of other countries. Specifically, most of them have become increasingly dependent on world markets and on the arrangements (such as international exchange and dependable transport) incidental to such markets. Still more specifically, many of them have become dependent on world prices. As the level of economic life has risen, as industrialization has been intensified, as popular standards of

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living have risen, this dependence, or rather interdependence, has become more acute. Today all save the primitive countries and possibly, although not certainly, one very large but undeveloped country, namely the Soviet Union, maintain their economic lives on this international tenure.

The second force is the increase in population. This is a vast, additional driving force lying below the economic fact and mightily intensifying it. In the first half of the twentieth century, world population increased from roughly two billion to two billion seven hundred million. The demographers tell us that the rise will be even greater in the second half of the century. In my own lifetime, the population of the United States has almost doubled: there are sharper increases in population in other parts of the world, notably Latin America. In both of these areas, there was lebensraum. There have been increases less dramatic percentage-wise, but more dynamic because of local conditions, in most of the great Asian countries, notably China, India and Indonesia. Here there was not adequate lebensraum, with the result that the populations were increasingly forced into territorial expansion or more intense economic activity, and into a great number of other human adventures as well.

The third force is essentially technical. The keys to industrialization and development in all fields were essentially scientific, and scientists talk substantially the same language the world over. Unquestionably the common body of accepted ideas throughout the world is vastly greater than has ever been the case in human history. In that respect the nineteenth century brought high development to a progress which has fairly raced forward in the twentieth. This force can be subdivided, and two subdivisions deserve mention. One of these, of course, is the fact that mathematical, physical and other abstract sciences have a language that is universal. The other is the dim awareness of populations, or at least of the directing groups, that mastery of scientific knowledge and technical skills and the development of the necessary plant can solve certain age-old human problems. Enough food can be produced to feed the world; enough shelter to house it. The problem of a tolerable standard of living is now thought to be soluble—provided



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the combination of scientific knowledge, technical skill, capital facilities and organization can be achieved.

The fourth force is a world-wide demand from those groups who speak for populations that their peoples shall be admitted to the fruits of this apparently possible productivity and distribution.

The results of a world so thrown into contact with itself, and practically for the first time, have certainly not been peaceful. The disturbances which have occurred are, I think, chiefly attributable to the breakdown after World War I of the nineteenth-century organization by which an era of economic and military equilibrium known as "the Victorian Age" had been achieved under the leadership of the British Empire. At that war's end, the Russian Revolution not only liberated the Russian people from the czarist system but, through the Communist dogma of the time, dramatized the demands of peoples everywhere for a better economic break than was then being offered by any existing regime. In the ensuing years the world-wide revolution gained headway. It is not yet over.

World War II was essentially a struggle between revolutionary methods—exacerbated, as always, by the curious ambition of men and races to dominate other men and other races. Germans, having chosen the Nationalist-Fascist methods of Hitler, sought to impose those methods (and, of course, their Nazi government) on literally the entire world. Their defeat left the field open to two nations: the Soviet Union under Stalin, and the United States. Stalin, in effect, adopted the Hitler technique. He proposed to create a Soviet world empire by direct military force, where possible, or by exported package revolutions.

In foreign affairs, the United States rarely makes up its mind consciously, but its decisions are no less distinct over any period of time. We unthinkingly conquered the remnants of the Spanish Empire in 1898. More or less rapidly we reached an irrevocable decision not to seize territory and not to organize an empire. Entering the world struggle after World War II, empire was not in the American armory. Thus, the contest today is essentially between the Soviet Union, which indulges dreams of world empire, and the American dream of creating an orderly and effective community of independent nations.



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Beneath these two polarizations the deep forces noted above have, as history goes, moved forward with unparalleled speed. The United Nations, given by President Roosevelt to the world as a possible nucleus of organization of a world community, struggles desperately to make that community a reality. But for the time being it is primarily a meeting ground and field of diplomatic, political and propaganda maneuvering.

A major casualty of these deep forces has been the existence of the sovereign independent state as we understood it a few years ago. Modern economics, as noted, make it practically impossible for any state, even the largest, to exist at a tolerable economic level except as part of a complex of many other countries. Were the United States, for example, cut off from all foreign commerce, the economy of America would drop in six months' time to a level few of us would tolerate; and in the process at least a dozen other countries would be reduced to collapse. Were smaller countries, say Great Britain or Germany (let alone the Netherlands), thus circumscribed, their peoples would approach starvation. In the eighteenth or even mid-nineteenth century, this would not have happened. Certainly there would have been trouble, loss of luxury, and some hardship, but life would have gone on. But this is not so today. Economically, few countries, if any, are now sovereign save in name.

Perhaps the Soviet Union is. Her area is vast, her resources great, her population capable and increasingly trained, and her standard of living low. For a time she might manage with her own resources. But not for long. The precise advances promised by the Stalinist and now by the Khrushchev Communist government impose a growing interdependence. Even now the Soviet Union is partly dependent on her external conquered empire, notably the industrial production of Czechoslovakia and Poland. Her relations with Communist China, which is not and cannot be self-sufficient, add demands on her productive system, which in turn increase her dependence on exchange with other parts of the world.

Modern technology has also made it diabolically plain that no country can defend itself by itself. Actually it is questionable whether any country can really "defend" itself at all. Defense was



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possible even to small countries when attacks were made by pikemen. Now we have guided missiles with atomic war-heads, as well as air attack. The best defense suggested thus far resolves itself into the capacity for retaliation, that is, into a balance of terror. At present a country forced to defend itself from within its own boundaries may conceivably win a war of retaliation. But the cost is so frightful as to obliterate the difference between victory and defeat, and certainly to negate the idea of defense. Nations, therefore, are no longer sovereign in defense save in name. They must, to be safe at all, work within a grouping of nations held together either by alliance or common interest, or by the brute force of empire.

The results of these influences, and others as well, have given rise to a phenomenon that to a student of international affairs is the most striking, interesting and novel factor in the current scene. This is the movement, present everywhere in the world, toward groupings of nations.

It can be noted at once that the phenomenon of the grouping of nations underlines a paradox. Rarely in history has nationalism been as rampant as today. The breakup of the nineteenth-century empires has led to the formation of new nations from Korea to Ghana, each claiming independence and fiercely asserting its nationalist sovereignty. We now have ninety independent nations. Although this appears to be a rejection of grouping, the countries under colonial rule demanding and receiving their independence have found themselves in the grip of precisely the deep forces we have noted. For instance, simultaneously with Moroccan independence, a Moroccan delegation arrived in Washington asking a loan to finance her new-found sovereignty, and the problem of her place in the economic equilibrium has not yet been solved. Illustrations could be multiplied. The nineteenth-century grouping through empire has broken down; a twentieth-century system has not emerged. But a twentieth-century system is proving even more necessary to economic life than was the imperialist system.

The Soviet empire encountered the same situation. The Communist rulers, like Hitler, undertook a regime of planned econ-



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omy: this was intelligent. Also, like Hitler, they arranged that this planned economy should be tributary to their capital centers: this was not intelligent. As a result, Yugoslavia seceded; and the last two years have seen revolutions in Hungary and in Poland. If Moscow is to hold these areas she will have to spend her own resources for the cost of dominion. Colonies are no longer assets. The Soviet empire, like the Free World, has to find or make groups for economic life and for defense.

Statesmen have begun to wrestle with this situation in various ways. On the American side, Mr. Nelson Rockefeller and I tackled the problem first at the Conference of Chapultepec in 1945. A brilliant Colombian diplomat, Alberto Lleras Camargo, had outlined to President Roosevelt a plan for an inter-American union. Following his instructions at Chapultepec, the project developed along two lines: a draft treaty of mutual defense (today the Treaty of Rio de Janeiro) and a plan for common attack on social and economic problems (now comprised within the Charter of the Organization of American States worked out at Bogotá).

The American mind ran first to defense since America then had, and still has, the illusion of being economically self-sufficient. The first set of groups were therefore primarily defense alliances. After the Treaty of Rio de Janeiro came the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Half a dozen smaller groups have since come into existence. The Soviet Union paid us the compliment of imitation by organizing a Communist defense union known as the Warsaw Pact.

Defense alliances, however, solve few economic problems. The United States temporized with the problem by working from the point of view of foreign aid. There followed the famous Marshall Aid Program, which has been continued in one form or another ever since. I have consistently been, and now am, in favor of foreign aid programs. They will be absolutely essential until we tackle the problem we have thus far refused to face. But they are not cures, and they are not solutions. Some better organization of international economics, not to mention American economics, is a precondition to discontinuance of foreign aid.

European statesmen knew better and went farther. After sev-



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eral abortive attempts and after constructing a number of minor co-operative institutions, they finally came up in 1949 with a remarkable institution known as the Coal and Steel Community. This is a state, if you like—at all events the United States and other countries send ambassadors to it—that is not based on geography. The "subjects" are the producers of steel and coal. Its jurisdiction is over these enterprises, and it plans the economy of these industries in six Western nations. It can break through tariff barriers, can attempt to equate production with demand, can assure substantial continuity of employment, is in fact a sovereign, supranational industry, meeting one of the prime problems of Western Europe.

From then on, the international perspective acquired a new dimension. A second supranational community was proposed by the United States: EURATOM. Now the European nations have formed "Euromarket" (the European Economic Community) which is just getting under way. What is happening is a slow striation of political sovereignty. Each of these new organizations —and they themselves are already grouping into a single European complex—does take away some fragment of power from the constituent nations, but gives each access to a wider and more balanced complex of supply and need. This is frank recognition that modern economic processes have little to do with historical, ethnic or even political boundaries, and cannot be imprisoned within them if populations are to live acceptably. Many other groupings are in progress.

I revert to the thesis stated at the beginning. The world is being driven together by forces far deeper than politics. The first effect is seen in the ferment or formation of these regional groupings for defense and for economic life. This process is inevitable; wisdom lies in recognizing it. We may look down this vista for a moment. These regional groupings themselves are in turn being driven together. For example, the economics of a united Arabia are not comprehended within any possible grouping of Arab nations. Nor are the economics of NATO viable unless there is accommodation with the Organization of American States and possibly parts of Africa. Wisdom, it seems to me, lies in



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recognizing and working with these forces rather than calculating our policy only in terms of the momentary political passions that bring them into being.

Foreign affairs today thus present a kaleidoscopic picture of nations moving on novel economic, military and political lines in search of a viable organization of affairs. In this process they are operating within a vast drama dominated by the current conflict between Washington and Moscow.

This conflict was a Russian choice. Moscow willed it, continued it and has carried it on. If history has criticism of Franklin Roosevelt, it is that he went too far in endeavoring to assuage Soviet fears, satisfy legitimate Soviet interests and avoid postwar rivalry. Stalin decided in favor of conflict. He challenged for the control of Europe, Asia and the Middle East while his propaganda claimed the entire world. Essentially that policy is the Soviet policy today. Its weakness is the growing historical proof that Moscow is constructing not a viable world community but a sterile military empire. However, an order based on a ruthless military empire that promises, without delivering, economic stabilization, looks better, in some parts of the world, than no order at all. Moscow has used force regularly, Korea and Hungary being two notable instances. The United States has naturally and properly reacted by developing its own force. Thus danger grows and tension mounts.

In this situation Moscow calls for a summit conference to "relax tensions." This has a certain appeal. Obviously the world cannot afford World War III, and everyone knows it. A diplomatic battle is therefore squarely joined. The problem is how to reach a tolerable situation of affairs.

Two proposals for a temporary solution have been made, neither of which seems to me to meet the situation. My old friend George Kennan proposes what he calls "disengagement." Reduced to lowest terms, he suggests eliminating Germany as a military factor in Europe in exchange for Soviet withdrawal from the Iron Curtain countries. At the same time, he proposes more intense American action against any Communist guerrilla operations outside spheres tacitly recognized as being within the Russian orbit. This implies, of course, an acceptance of some areas of Russian



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conquest, although Mr. Kennan's hope is that Soviet troops will be withdrawn from the Mid-European area. I question whether this is immediately possible—the Soviet government by now well knows that the captive European countries will not stay captive very long once Russian troops are withdrawn.

Mr. Acheson, expressing disapproval of Mr. Kennan, proposes erection of even greater structures of Western power in Asia and in Europe, remembering the tragic effects of withdrawal of American troops from Korea. To him, power is the key. But increasingly, the periphery of power is the boundary of the range within which a substantial quantity of atomic missiles can be delivered by air or rocket. The bases of that power are the points from which air or missile attack can be launched. These lie far behind the actual point of delivery of power. Troops stationed forward of the launching sites—in our case, close to the Iron Curtain line in Europe and the northern line of the Baghdad Pact countries in the Near East—simply amount to this: attack on them presumably will precipitate the retaliatory launching of counterattack by long-range airplanes and missiles from bases or stations far behind the location of actual troops—that is, will precipitate World War III. The Soviet empire and its troops outside its borders are, of course, in exactly the same position.

Disengagement by withdrawal of troops either way is not, in truth, disengagement. Any space which conceivably might be evacuated either by the Soviet Union or by ourselves is now or is about to be covered by the range of guided missiles. Withdrawal does indeed remove the automatic certainty that a Russian operation of any kind into Western Europe from the Russian side or, conversely, into Eastern Europe from the Western side, means a final appeal to atomic arms. For the time being, I do not see that either side is yet ready or willing to do this. I think the time will come, I hope soon, when such arrangements can be made; but a precondition is our conviction that the Soviet empire will not move her land forces. Americans have little fear of what will happen in Germany when American troops come back from the Elbe; they do fear that the Russian divisions will move from East Germany to the Rhine. I do not think the Soviet Union fears that NATO



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troops would move into Hungary or Czechoslovakia;but she does fear that when her troops are withdrawn from East Germany, Poland and Hungary, those countries will abandon the Soviet empire at once. When she is prepared to accept the existence of non-Communist Mid-European states—probably neutralized like Austria and Finland—as in time she must be, a disengagement arrangement could be worked out. My unsupported guess is that we shall arrive at that point in four or five years.

The Near East presents a different picture. It seems probable that the eruptive unification of the Arab states will go forward. As it does so, the resultant state is unlikely to be a satellite either of the Soviet Union or of the West. Its economics will depend chiefly on the West, but partly on Russia and Asia. Its cultural and social pattern will be its own. Its social organization probably will be neither Communist, nor West European, nor American. In economics and trade it is more likely to go into a Mediterranean framework than into a Muscovite orbit, though it will have contacts with both worlds, and there is no reason why it should not.

The Far East, and specifically the Asian coast region, is in motion. Here I have little analysis or forecast to offer. Plainly, Russian and Chinese interests have already silently clashed, even though Communist China and the Soviet Union are working together in terms of cordiality and alliance. There is plenty of evidence that Communist China does not accept Soviet hegemony in any part of Asia or the Pacific. Probably neither China nor the Soviet Union is in position to move without the other. The Soviet Union must, economically, assist and support Communist China for the same reason we have had to assist and support Western Europe from 1945 on. But the Kremlin cannot count on Chinese assistance in any Soviet Far Eastern move for the benefit of the Soviet Union. And, it is by no means certain, even now, that the Soviet Union will automatically assist the Chinese Communists in any move that will primarily benefit Communist China.

Estimating the entire situation, it would seem that we are approaching a stalemate so far as surface military and diplomatic movements are concerned. Meanwhile the deep forces continue to press. That pressure will force a break in the situation in a few



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short years. For that break the United States, and indeed the entire Free World, must be fully prepared. Then, quite possibly, there will be opportunity to begin to lay bases for a real structure of peace.

It is evident that the stalemate can only be broken by some entirely new picture of world organization, corresponding to the realities imposed by the deep forces I have mentioned. So the time has again come for global thinking. Half the world will not submit to any system imposed by the Soviet empire, just as it refused to submit to a system imposed by Hitler. On the other hand, it does not propose to impose its own system or its own empire on anyone else. Meanwhile, both halves of the world are moving, in a new dimension of foreign relations, toward groupings that are thought to offer greater economic well-being. And both sides profess to want, and I think do want, freedom from the intense and growing danger of atomic destruction.

The alleged battle between the capitalist and the Communist systems is not, I think, the real issue despite strident Russian propaganda.

The next move ought to be Western proposals in two fields. On the economic side, we should begin to wrestle with the organization of a true twentieth-century economic system. On the military side, we should keep up the endless search for eventual international control of arms. Both of these are essential.

The United States and Western Europe will not fight a war for the purpose of upsetting anyone's socialist economy, let alone a war to impose our own peculiar type of economic development. I question whether the Soviet Union will now engage in any substantial war solely to upset a capitalist system.

The Russian military-diplomatic moves of the past ten years have been, frankly, to gain and hold a military empire. Western moves have been, no less frankly, to prevent areas from being incorporated into the Russian or Chinese empires. The Iron Curtain countries should have proved to Moscow that military conquest and occupation do not convert populations to Communist socialism. On the other hand, the United States is not socialist or likely to be; but she has little interest in making a socialist country into a



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capitalist country, while she has every interest in preventing any country—socialist or capitalist—from becoming part of a military machine designed to conquer her.

On the economic side, the Soviet empire and its smiling rival, Communist China, claim to offer, and in limited measure do offer, a stabilized economic world. The West, and particularly America, still seems to think that the economic world will automatically stabilize itself along the lines of the Victorian age. The neutral bloc, notably India and, I rather think, the Arabian union when it is finally organized, will need a stabilized economic world. Thus, the pull of the power bloc that offers the greatest measure of economic stability with promise of economic advance is likely to determine the eventual orientation of these countries.

The capacity to produce a stable system of international economics is likely to determine also how solid a force the Free World really is. Great parts of South and Central America at this moment find that their fate lies in the dubious balance of certain world prices (notably, coffee, cotton, copper and wheat) and of continued consumption of their oil. They are demanding stabilization exactly as American farmers demand stabilization of agricultural prices, but for more reason: their lives are at stake. Other parts of the Free World also depend for their economic life on the United States: this is particularly true at the moment of Great Britain.

We have met this situation in part by aid and in part by allowing admission to American markets. This is essential until we work out a more dependable system. But it leaves huge areas uncovered. Egypt, at present the organizing center of the Arab union, draws 80 per cent of its economic life from cotton—and we have no present method of assuring a peaceful Egypt a purchaser for her cotton. Brazil depends on coffee, and Uruguay and Argentina on meat and wheat. A break in world prices in these products provokes immediate trouble.

In consequence, stabilization plans covering the entire Free World and dealing with the chief commodities on which commerce depends now become the urgent business of statesmen. This is not the time or the place to suggest how this can be done.



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But it is fair to say that American leaders must now begin to think as deeply and fundamentally as did European statesmen when they formed the Coal and Steel Community and the European common market. Probably, before the job is completed, we shall find that expansion of world banking facilities is no less necessary.

On the military-diplomatic side, the principle has been recognized that in the modern world with rocket missiles no single nation will be, or can be, supreme. Any great country will presently be in position to wipe out almost any other great country. Since abolition of nuclear fission and international ballistics is presently impossible, the only remaining solution is a tight international control of these weapons and their uses.

It is of interest that both on the economic and on the military side, the United Nations has skeleton organizations for these purposes. In the beginning the Soviet Union refused to accept them. The refusal made the West equally unwilling to use these agencies. But both sides may reconsider.

The time has come when, I think, both the West and the East are likely to consider seriously reasonable global plans. This is not because of sudden conversion to internationalist faith. It is, quite simply, because the forces with which we all work, whether in economics or in international ballistic missiles, are themselves worldwide—and no other solutions make sense.

For this reason, the next phase of Western statesmanship has to be at once bold and imaginative. It must deal with realism rather than romance, even though the realism of today looks like the romance of yesterday. Nationalism will continue: it is defense of culture, thought and ways of life. But economics and defense are no longer national, but multinational. Economics is a means to an end: the end is life. The true use of military organization is now to maintain and preserve world order: it has no other rational base. Acceptable economic and military organizations are within the power now not of any single nation but only of groups of nations and, in the future, perhaps, only to a world system. In the course of a few years, if peace is granted, the deep forces at work will drive home their inevitable lessons in all capitals.



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# *Plainsong*

LOUISE TOWNSEND NICHOLL

When, careful steel circling the satin leaf,
This harsh December keeps the summer safe,
How does the mind in such a poor renown
Hold the stern month and its continuum?
How does the heart set but a decimal down
Of its own large imaginable sum,
When of the sun's whole scale one octave only
Secures all constancy, protective, lonely?
In this dark winter colder than the rest
We find the warmth within the iron fist.

✪ LOUISE TOWNSEND NICHOLL, formerly an associate editor with E. P. Dutton & Company, is now a free-lance editor and literary advisor. Miss Nicholl is the author of one book of prose and six collections of poems, the most recently published being *The Curious Quotient.*

"Plainsong" and other poems by Miss Nicholl that have appeared in THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR are being published in a book to be released by St. Martin's Press this year, *The World's One Clock.*



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# The Steins in Paris

ALINE B. SAARINEN

IT HAS BEEN SAID that as many people claim to have discovered modern art as there are cities claiming to be the birthplace of Homer. The most convincing of the contenders are the four members of the Stein family—Gertrude, Leo, Michael and Michael's wife, Sarah. They were not only discoverers but effective publicists and patrons. Within the family circle, however, there was a petulant dispute about priority.

Who, for instance, was actually responsible for buying Matisse's "Woman with a Hat" from the Paris Autumn Salon of 1905? Credit for the purchase was worth the wrangle. It took more than a little courage to buy a picture so jeered at that the artist dared visit the show only once, and his wife not at all.

The exhibition was notorious. Here were paintings such as the world had never seen, violent in distortion and riotous in color. Water was pink; flesh was green; brush strokes appeared slapdash. The paintings looked barbaric, pulsing with a fierce energy. Canvases by such young, little-known men as Matisse, Derain and Vlaminck filled the central gallery. As the story goes, when the critic Louis Vauxalles saw a small Renaissance-type bronze sculpture of a baby standing in the middle of these savage works, he remarked, "Ah, Donatello, *au milieu des fauves.*" And of all the paintings by these Fauves, or "Wild Beasts"—as they have been known ever since, even now that they bring prices approaching

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$100,000—Matisse's "Woman with a Hat" was the most ferocious.

Said Sister Gertrude, who had determined almost from babyhood that she wanted "gloire," the painting seemed perfectly natural; she could not understand why it infuriated everybody; *she* wanted it—though her brother, she claimed disparagingly, preferred a conventional painting of a white-clad lady on a green lawn. Sister-in-law Sarah said that *she* suggested the family make the purchase because of the "unprecedented magnificence of its color" and because it reminded her of her mother. Brother Leo saw no family resemblance at all. In fact, he found the picture "a thing brillant and powerful, but the nastiest smear of paint I had ever seen." But, "since it was what I was unknowingly waiting for," he managed to get over the unpleasantness in a few days. Stressing the personal pronoun, he remarked, "*I* had bought my first Matisse." He had "discovered" him at the dealer Vollard's a year before.

There was no controversy about who first "discovered" Picasso, but plenty of bitterness about who really appreciated and understood him. Leo came upon his work in 1905. He used to while away the time with Sagot, a dealer on the rue Lafitte, an ex-clown with a pointed beard who chewed on a piece of licorice and gossiped about art. Sagot directed Leo to an exhibition of Picasso's drawings. He is "the real thing," Sagot told him. Leo bought one. When he returned to Sagot's with Gertrude, the dealer showed them Picasso's tender "Young Girl with a Basket." On one point brother and sister agreed. Gertrude was "repelled and shocked by the drawing of the legs and feet." But Leo bought it. He had "discovered" Picasso.

During the next two years, Leo and Gertrude bought many other paintings by Picasso, who was then in his romantic, rather sentimental "blue" and "rose" periods. By 1906, Gertrude had posed ninety times for the Picasso portrait now in the Metropolitan Museum. Picasso was on the verge of his cubist phase, and Leo's enthusiasm was growing tepid. When Picasso turned the corner and began to reconstruct the world into cubes and planes, Leo called the paintings "fantastic contraptions" and "scrap-bag assemblages." Gertrude glowed. She insisted that what Picasso was do-



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ing in paint, she was doing in words. As she wrote later of her alter ego, every time she met a genius, a bell rang. The bell rang three times: once for herself, once for Picasso and once for Alfred North Whitehead, the mathematician. She did not do very much about Whitehead, but she kept the bell pealing loudly for the other two. Long before public relations became a profession, Gertrude Stein became her own best press agent and Picasso's best publicist.

Sarah, on the other hand, did her enthusiastic bit for Matisse, who, in turn, called *her* the "really intelligent, sensitive member of the family." His appraisal was hardly disinterested. She was a devoted pupil; during the years 1905 to 1907, she and her husband, Michael, were Matisse's most important patrons; and when in 1906 they returned briefly to San Francisco to see what damage the earthquake had done to their home, they brought Matisse canvases along and sought converts in America.

It was an undertaking not without hazards. The "startling news that there was such stuff in town has been communicated," she wrote to Gertrude. "Oh, Albert Bender has been our most faithful and devoted, as always . . . but his devotion hardly stood the test of the '*femme au nez vert*.' . . . Upon his demand, I assured him that perhaps he'd better spare himself this test, as I knew his belief in my infallibility was something very dear to him. 'No,' he said, '*I* shall never, never, never say, as others have, that you are crazy.' Well, he saw it—for two minutes he was speechless —then he meekly inquired, 'But don't *you* think you're crazy?' " Crazy or not, the Michael Steins were responsible for the framer George Of buying a Matisse—the artist's first sale in America. They also so intrigued another San Francisco lady, Harriet Lane Levy, that she and her friend Alice B. Toklas soon came to Paris to look for themselves. Miss Levy, under Sarah's direction, was to become another Matisse collector.

But Leo Stein licked his wounds. "I was the only person anywhere, so far as I know," he wrote testily years later, "who in those early days recognized Picasso *and* Matisse. Picasso had some admirers and Matisse had some, but I was alone in recognizing the two as important men."

The "two important men," like almost all the other pioneering



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artists and writers, musicians, collectors, bohemians and intellectuals, doers and re-doers, prodigies and parasites, met each other at the Saturday night salons at 27 rue de Fleurus, where from 1903 to 1914 Leo and Gertrude Stein lived in as harmonious a relationship as was possible between a brother and sister caught in a dramatic psychological conflict.

Together, the four Steins made looking at and buying art a family adventure. Their means were small, but the new art was cheap. They went to Berthe Weill's tiny gallery, to the big conventional salons, to the "independent" exhibitions and, perhaps most often, to Ambrose Vollard's. This astute dealer, who was to handle the work of most of the important artists of his time, remembered them in his strange, junk-shop-like gallery. Leo would sprawl in an armchair with his feet high up on a bookcase (it was one of his many temporary remedies for digestive troubles). Gertrude would squat on a chair, roaring her much renowned, richly resounding belly laugh—a laugh like a beefsteak, one friend described it; a laugh that had glory, another put it. Sarah touted hard for Matisse. But Leo in those days was the leader. The brave new collection was growing.

The Steins' acquaintance with Matisse deepened into friendship when they bought "Woman with a Hat" and agreed to pay his asking price of $100. They became friendly with Picasso through Henri-Pierre Roché, whom they called "the great introducer." Roché, journalist and artist, was a tall, redheaded man with a romantically sorrowful face, whom Leo described as being "all ear" and Gertrude as one "who was always listening." He was the sort of man who knew "everybody," and in those early days before, as Gertrude says, "everybody brought somebody" to their salons, he was just what the rather ambitious Steins needed.

The "come on" to the Leo-Gertrude Saturday nights was, at first, Leo's Japanese prints and, as one habitué cynically remarked, the long loaves of French bread and platters of ham and cheese that stood in the center of the studio on the Renaissance refectory table behind a large, overstuffed couch. But soon the spectacular attraction was the Steins' collection of contemporary and near-contempo-



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rary masters. From 1905 to the beginning of World War I, 27 rue de Fleurus was the most vital and exciting center of modern art in the world.

There were Picassos, large and small, of harlequins and tenderly awkward young girls, and there was his commanding portrait of Gertrude with its grave, mask-like face, of which she said later, "And I was and still am satisfied with my portrait of me, it is I, and it is the only reproduction of me which is always I, for me." There were rows of carnival-bright paintings by Matisse, including a robust sketch expressing exuberantly his own "Joy of Life" and his powerful, violently distorted, literally "Blue Nude." This bold painting disturbed most of the visitors. One of them, seeking desperately for something agreeable to say to Matisse about it, ended up remarking, "I don't think I could take that pose," to which Matisse replied charmingly, "*Et moi non plus, madame.*" But Gertrude would soothe aggressive spectators by telling them that her janitor's four-year-old son, when he first saw the "Blue Nude," "cried out in rapture, 'oh la la, what a beautiful body of a woman!' "

There were luscious little Renoirs and hot-toned, patterned Gauguins. There were paintings by Vallaton and Manguin, now almost forgotten; there was a little Daumier, a little Greco, a Toulouse-Lautrec. And there were small Cézanne watercolors and larger Cézanne landscapes in oil and a big portrait of Madame Cézanne. The paintings were hung close together, two to three deep, and odd *bibelots* stood on top of Renaissance chests, so that the room had a cluttered, Victorian look which made the modernity of the art all the more astonishing.

Soon "everybody" came to the salons. Apollinaire brought his friend Marie Laurencin, who peered nearsightedly at the paintings through her lorgnette. She sold her first painting to the Steins—an ingenious quadruple portrait of herself and Apollinaire, Picasso and *his* current friend, doe-eyed Fernande Olivier. The painters Derain, Vlaminck, Braque (who asked diffidently, "What do they want of us?" when Roché first invited him to attend), Pascin and Delaunay came. The American painters Maurice Sterne, Marsden Hartley and Alfred Maurer came—and Maurer would reassure dubious visitors that, of course, the Cézannes were finished—why



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else would they be framed? The farsighted and courageous dealer Daniel Kahnweiler, who promoted the cubists, came. So did Edward Steichen, a young man who was to find in photography a great twentieth-century art form and who was to be a courier of modern art to America. The splendid Russian collector Sergei Shchukin came. The German, Hans Purrmann, who, with Sarah Stein and Patrick Henry Bunce, was to start Matisse's school, came. The hot-tempered collector from Philadelphia, Dr. Albert Barnes, the inventor of Argyrol, came, waving his checkbook. Even the Berensons occasionally came.

There, in 1906, for the first time, Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso met each other. Picasso, then twenty-five, looked like a small-boned gangster, or as a friend of Gertrude Stein's said, "like a good-looking bootblack," with a thatch of black hair curving down over one of his enormous dark eyes. Matisse was then thirty-seven. Leo described him as "bearded, but with propriety; spectacled neatly; intelligent; freely spoken, but a little shy." Fernande Olivier recalled that when they met, Matisse was very much master of himself and shone imposingly against Picasso "who was always a bit sullen and restrained at such encounters." "They were," she concludes, "the two artists one paid the most attention to."

The Saturday night salons were an international pre-café society—Russians, Poles, Scandinavians and Germans along with English, Americans, Spaniards and French were there. The Steins' salon was the artists' showcase and press conference. It was the crossroads and the vortex. Perhaps no other collection was ever so effective a stimulant and catalyst.

Leo, pontifically divulging the contents of his encyclopedic mind, would hold forth on the enchantment of calculus and the Cavalier poets, on William James and the Gesta Romanorum, and revert intermittently, crusadingly, to dissertations on the validity of modern art. Unlike the brash and brutal Dr. Barnes in every other respect, Leo Stein shared the Philadelphian's abhorrence of "twaddle about art instead of hardheaded common sense." He never "enjoyed" a painting. He struggled to discover why he felt it had power. Once acquired, a picture became like a microscopic slide to a scientist.



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Gertrude, who knew what she liked and what she wanted to like and didn't care why, spoke little. She usually reclined on a chaise longue. Occasionally she would join Leo in patronizing the new Americans who were not yet initiated into the mysteries of Cézanne and Picasso or, egged on by confederates, would proceed from bantering to bullying. Her resplendent laughter made a throbbing obbligato to the evening's talk.

The Michael Steins had rival Saturday nights at their home on the rue Madame. Their walls were covered exclusively by Matisses —all the important Matisses of the years 1905 to 1907, in fact, that were not at the rue de Fleurus. Although, as an asp-tongued friend of Gertrude's remarked, Sarah saw herself as a provincial Madame de Staël, the Michael Steins were less ambitious and less exhibitionistic. *Chez* Michael Stein, life was bourgeois and cozy. There was less bohemian atmosphere, and there were fewer intellectual pyrotechnics at their house than at the Leo-Gertrude salons. The Michael-Sarah evenings ended early, so that people went first to the rue Madame and then to the rue de Fleurus, where the gatherings lasted until two or three in the morning.

When the artists left, they would hail a yellow fiacre to take them back to their world of Montmartre or would storm through the streets of Montparnasse. They all had a sense that these were their heroic days. Picasso would shoot a pistol in the air out of sheer exuberance. Roché, drunk, would go to Braque's to look at new paintings, fall asleep and awaken staring at an African mask, new enthusiasm of the pre-cubist painters.

By 1910, the tenor of the Leo-Gertrude salons had changed. Alice B. Toklas, a thin, dark and intellectually quick little gnome, who was to become famous as the "subject" of Gertrude Stein's autobiography and later as the author of a cookbook, had joined the household. Leo had already met Nina Azais, the luscious, sympathetically loving former artist's model whom he would finally marry in 1921. Leo was becoming increasingly irritated by Picasso's cubist explorations and considered his work—like Gertrude's—"the most God-almighty rubbish that is to be found." He was growing bored with Matisse's painting. He was even beginning to judge



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Cézanne a "squeezed lemon," an opinion which later caused Picasso to remark, "You can bet that Leo never tasted a drop of that juice." Leo grew increasingly remote. On the Saturday nights he retreated to an adjoining room. "He had tired of the mob," says the critic-painter Walter Pach. "He wanted to talk stomach-ache and politics and esthetics—but mostly stomach-ache."

The inevitable divorce between Leo and Gertrude came in 1914. According to his biographer, Carl W. McCardle, Dr. Barnes received the most succinct account. Leo, whom he met on the street, told him he was moving to Italy. "I can't stand Gertrude. She's crazy," he explained. When Barnes told Gertrude he heard Leo was moving, she said, "That's fine. You know, he's crazy."

It was an oversimplified explanation, but like most oversimplifications, it had truth in it. Two more neurotic personalities would be hard to find. The fact that Leo was so bogged down by his neuroses that his talents and capacities were rendered almost impotent and that Gertrude so accepted and reveled in hers that they determined a whole extrovert way of life did not make the situation any easier. She demanded constant, extravagant praise of herself and the extension of herself in her writing. But Leo found her prose gawkish gibberish, the result, he claimed, of her inability to compose a lucid sentence. He, in turn, accustomed to being the master of the relationship, resented her growing independence, and though his demands were less flamboyant than hers, his need for ego-building admiration was no less insatiable.

He had another oversimplified explanation for their break: "Gertrude and I are just the contrary. She's basically stupid and I'm basically intelligent. . . . She was practically inaccessible to ideas and I was accessible to nothing else." And here, too, there was truth.

Dispassionate thoroughness was Leo's hallmark. Cerebrally, relentlessly, he pursued whatever subject hooked his questing mind, whether a faddish theory of starvation to cure "appetitelessness," the ways to cook zucchini (he achieved twenty-seven, including one recipe with walnuts), or the precise definition of poetry as distinguished from prose. Gertrude, on the other hand, greedily embraced everything and anything. She gave herself ex-



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pansively and jovially to all relationships—whether the subject was Bertrand Russell or a naïve doughboy. Though her enthusiasms might wear themselves out and her friendships end in quarrels, she trusted first sight and first instinct. Paintings, for Leo, were essentially only instruments for philosophizing and analysis; for Gertrude, who enjoyed artists even more than art, they were the revealing expressions of creative personalities.

Like all other divorcees, Leo and Gertrude divided their personal property. Leo took most of the Renaissance furniture. Thereafter, Gertrude filled 27 rue de Fleurus with chintz and more amply commodious chairs. Leo was to get most of the Renoirs and Matisses; Gertrude was to keep most of the Picassos and almost everything else. The Cézannes were to be divided. After reviewing their agreement, Leo wrote her, "I hope that we will all live happily ever after and maintain our respective and due proportions while sucking gleefully our respective oranges."

After Leo's departure and the end of World War I, many of the old friends were gone and the sense of pioneering diminished, but in their own ways, Gertrude and Michael and Sarah carried on.

The Michael Steins, with their divorcée friend Gabrielle Osorio, moved into the rue de la Tour. Their Matisse collection was depleted. They had yielded to the artist's persuasion and allowed nineteen of their great Matisses to go to Germany in 1917 for a one-man show. When the United States entered the war, the paintings were expropriated and a German dealer greedily bought them up at low prices. After the war, the Steins' friend Purrmann tried to get them back, but through further chicanery on the German's part, the paintings ended up in the hands of the two Scandinavian collectors who had been angling for them for years. The missing nineteen hardly made a dent in the Matisse treasure that the Michael Steins still owned—including the 1916 portrait of Sarah with her warm, wide-eyed, heart-shaped face, and Michael with his detached, reliable look—but the Michael Steins began partially to make good their loss by buying still more Matisses.

Michael, who had enjoyed the South of France during the war,



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began to get restive in Paris. Sarah, a doting and overprotective mother, wanted to stay in Paris to be near their son, Alan. They compromised on a Paris suburb, Garches. At an exhibition in 1925, Michael Stein and Mme. Osorio were intrigued by the photograph of a house by the young Swiss architect Le Corbusier. They approached him about building their house at Garches. Thorny, vain and independent even as a young man, the talented Le Corbusier viewed his first big private job with skepticism. "I have to be very careful when I take clients," he announced, "so that they won't spoil my house with their furniture."

Although Le Corbusier was making chairs of metal pipe, the Renaissance furniture that the Steins had bought in Florence in 1904 somehow passed muster. Le Corbusier built them a flat-roofed house, with floors that cantilevered out from interior exposed posts. It had an "open" plan, ribbon windows and so many terraces that it was named "Les Terraces." It was one of the first of what he called "machines for living" (a phrase with which his detractors have hounded him ever since, although he wrote at that same time that " 'a machine for living' was a step on the way to architecture," a "credo" that would lead to poetical expression). The neighbors jeered at what, in their most polite moments, they called "a box with windows." But Les Terraces attracted a large enough number of international intellectuals to satisfy the local Madame de Staël (who served them homemade ice cream on Sunday afternoons). Le Corbusier and Matisse met at Garches. The architect had not thought too highly of the painter until he heard Matisse remark to his host, "This young man has talent." Thereafter Le Corbusier referred to Matisse as "a great master."

Meanwhile, Gertrude's salons were flourishing. In Alice B. Toklas she found companion, disciple, amanuensis, protector, housekeeper, general manager and a talented needleworker, who covered footstools and chairs with cubist paintings translated into petit point. Miss Toklas and Miss Stein made an even more astonishing-looking pair than had Leo and Gertrude. Alice B. Toklas' intent little face, sharp as a raccoon's, and her black-clad figure contrasted with Gertrude Stein's imposing bulk and her large face which, under its short, mannish haircut, began to look at once



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imperial and peasant-wise. Everybody who was somebody continued to come to 27 rue de Fleurus—and so did everybody who thought he was somebody and everybody who was "nobody"—young artists, young writers, young musicians, sightseers, curiosity seekers, and the doughboys of World War I—as G.I.'s would come after World War II.

Where Leo had abandoned modern art, Gertrude took it up. In pinning down Leo's position as an art collector, the scholar Alfred H. Barr, Jr., never an extravagant man, reached the apogee of guarded exactitude: "For two brief years, between 1905 and 1907, he was possibly the most discerning connoisseur and collector of twentieth-century painting in the world."

Gertrude's contribution could be less precisely pinpointed, and her impact was more forceful. Indeed, the first of her writings published in America were "Portraits" of Matisse and Picasso. They had appeared in 1912 in a special edition of *Camera Work,* published by Alfred Stieglitz. Yet these "Portraits"—like the dozens of others that Gertrude Stein was to write about the dozens of other artists who, at least temporarily, captured her interest—were like publicity releases. In their curious, monotonous way, they had some instinctive sense of each artist's art. Their subjects gained stature for the limited but taste-setting audience that read them.

Excited about Picasso's cubism, she became a devoted admirer, purchaser and friend of the lyric Spanish cubist Juan Gris. She liked Picabia, who did a portrait that made her look as if she had been shaved for the last mile, and Jacques Lipchitz, who made a handsome sculpture that gave her majesty. Although she far outdistanced Leo in her appreciation of the cubist and post-cubist painters, as the critic James Thrall Soby points out, "like nearly all collectors, she was capable of appreciating to the full only one generation of living artists." She kept trying to hitch on to the younger generation, and she knew and encouraged a number of young men. One was Pavel Tchelitchew, the one she preferred of the group she called "the russians." She pointed pridefully to the fact that "Picasso had been drawing three heads in one. Soon the russian was painting three figures in one." But she quickly had enough of each of these younger men, and the



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only one whose work she bought in quantity was Sir Francis Rose —a distinctly minor artist—of whom she confessed she liked the man as well as his art.

That you were dropped by Gertrude Stein was unimportant; that she had taken you up was what counted. She had no doubts about her capacity to be the arbiter of modern art. Her opinions were expressed with the finality of papal encyclicals. She was so much the energizer, so much the catalyst, so much the overbearing spokesman, so much the taste-maker for the hordes of pilgrims that flocked to see her and her collection that, as one critic remarked, "It must be very hard to paint unless you know Gertrude Stein." After her death, Yale University arranged an exhibition called "Pictures for a Picture of Gertrude Stein," which included paintings by all the artists about whom she had written. Almost every important painter of her time was represented.

Gertrude, Leo and Michael and Sarah Stein were not collectors of modern masterpieces. Dozens of their successors can more justly claim that title. They acquired some fascinating and illuminating paintings, but only a very few were of the first order of magnitude. Yet the impact of the Steins was formidable. They altered the whole atmosphere of modern art. After the Steins, no self-respecting intellectual could ignore it. By becoming patrons of the great modern masters at crucial moments in their careers, the Steins gave these artists—especially Picasso and Matisse—influential boosts. The catalytic action of their salons and of Gertrude's writings brought these artists prominence and clients. When, in 1913, modern art burst upon the American public in the notorious Armory Show in New York, some of those who had helped select it and many of those who supported it had received initiation or indoctrination at 27 rue de Fleurus and 23 rue Madame.



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# Man, Food and Sex

MARSTON BATES

FOOD AND SEX ARE DIFFERENT—almost any adult can tell them apart. But they are curiously parallel in many ways, and they may even sometimes blend. In a few species of insects and spiders, the female eats the male—after copulation—and food exchange of some sort is a part of courtship behavior in many groups of animals. In human behavior, the parallels are shown in the use and meanings of a whole list of words that can pass back and forth between the contexts of food and sex: *appetite, hunger, satiated, starved.*

It is hardly extraordinary that there should be parallels because food and sex—nutrition and reproduction—are two basic needs or drives of all organisms. In the special case of human behavior, these biological needs have come under strong cultural control, and the cultural control has often modified them, restricted them, twisted them, in comparable ways.

Before looking at human behavior, we might briefly consider the biological roles of food and sex. From this point of view, we have to deal with three levels of organization—the individual, the population and the community. It is only when we look at individual behavior that we find parallels. Populations, as the biologist sees them, are defined in terms of sex, of reproductive behavior; communities, in terms of food. One could say that in studying the community, the biologist is concerned with who eats whom; in studying a population, with who sleeps with whom.

A biological species is defined as a population of individuals that form, actually or potentially, an interbreeding aggregation, separated from other similar populations by barriers to breeding,

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either behavioral or physiological. Mankind forms a single biological species because, as we all know, individuals from the most diverse subgroups of the total population are capable of interbreeding and producing fertile offspring: such breeding barriers as exist are geographical or cultural, not biological, and are easily transcended. In one way, then, the problem of the origin of species becomes the problem of the origin of breeding barriers within populations—the problem of the ways in which an interbreeding aggregation may become subdivided into two or more reproductively isolated populations, no longer capable of exchanging gene material, and hence subject to independent evolutionary developments.

The biological community—a quite different concept from that of the social community—is most easily described in terms of food chains or food webs. A forest, a pond, a coral reef, any biological community, is composed of the green plants that store up energy from the sun, of the key industry animals that live directly off the plants, of the secondary consumers that live off the key industry animals, and so ad infinitum, to the molds and bacteria that reduce the animal corpses to dust again. Food is thus the cement of the biological community, sex the cement of the species population.

Every individual animal, then, must deal with sex in relation to his species or population, and with food in relation to his biotic community; and there must be satisfactory adjustments of both food and sex relations if the species is to survive. Man is an animal and thus, in theory at least, subject to biological laws. But he is unique in being a cultured animal, and this culture does odd things to biological regularities. This is nowhere more apparent than when we try to interpret human sex habits or food habits in biological terms.

In general, throughout nature, sexual behavior can be studied in terms of reproduction. Mating occurs, for instance, only when the eggs of the female are ready for fertilization, and there are elaborate mechanisms to insure the proper timing of events in the two sexes of a particular species. But in cultured man, reproduction seems to be an incidental or even accidental consequence of sex. Food behavior, similarly, can generally be studied in terms of



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nutrition, and food still serves man for nutrition. But it would be difficult to explain salad dressings, wine sauces or soufflés purely in terms of either protein or vitamin needs.

It is a commonplace comment on Freudian psychology that its emphasis on sex comes from its basis in Western culture where sex is scarce—or at least strictly controlled—while food is reasonably abundant and generally available. British anthropologist Audrey Richards, in rebellion against this, set out some years ago to study human relations in an African tribe where sex was abundant and food restricted. She found, as expected, that in that society food dominated the subconscious as well as the conscious life of the people. In her book *Hunger and Work in a Savage Tribe*, she maintains that food behavior in man is far more basically and extensively governed by cultural or traditional considerations than is sexual behavior, and she is probably right. In our own society, food behavior is subject to all sorts of taboos and controls, which provide endless opportunity for psychological exploration.

I think one could safely say that there is no human society that deals rationally with the food in its environment, that eats according to the availability, edibility and nutritional value of the possible food materials within its reach. Very primitive, food-gathering cultures, like those of the Australian aborigines, probably come closest since they have to eat almost everything available and edible in order to survive; but even in such cultures we find special restrictions in regard to things like totem animals.

Our own food habits are certainly under strong cultural control, which may be inconvenient even though it does not involve the strong conscious and subconscious frustrations of sexual controls. Some patterns of food behavior are shared by all Western peoples, some are national, and some are more narrowly restricted. None of us, however, can afford to look down our noses at other people because of their food habits.

I became acutely conscious of this some years ago when asking a Hindu houseguest about his food requirements. He explained that he did not really have any deep religious convictions about food, but that he had rather not be expected to eat cow—that he supposed he felt about eating cows the way I would about eating dogs. The Hindu attitude toward cows is clearly uneconomical;



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but so is our attitude toward dogs. Maybe we can afford the prejudice better than they, but I suspect this is irrelevant. After all, dogs are specifically raised as food in some cultures, and eaten as opportunity affords in many others; they are said to be quite tasty. I still have not eaten dog, but I think I have a better understanding of the Hindu problem from this explanation.

A dog taboo appears to be universal in European civilization. A similar horse prejudice is much more local, but still powerful. The Harvard Faculty Club started serving horse steaks during the last war, and as far as I know still serves them on certain days. My wife, eating a horse steak, thought this was a fine idea, and when she got home tried to buy horse meat from our butcher. But she discovered that in our community horse meat could not be bought through the regular channels; it was sold only as a preparation for dog and cat food. We made one experiment with the stuff sold as dog food, only to discover that dog requirements in tenderness apparently differed from ours.

Even though repugnance to a particular food may have a cultural rather than physiological basis, it can still be very strong. The big lizards called iguanas are a highly prized article of food in all parts of tropical America where they occur; the meat has a delicate, chicken-like flavor. But in Europe and North America, lizards are not eaten for some reason, probably because we do not have any suitable species. I remember serving iguana at a dinner party in South America. The subject had been thoroughly discussed, and we thought everyone understood what they were eating; certainly they all ate with gusto. But as the conversation continued during the meal, a French lady who was present suddenly realized from the talk that the iguana she had been eating *était un lézard* and became violently nauseated, although a few minutes before she had considered the meat delicious.

I remember once, in the llanos of Colombia, sharing a dish of toasted ants at a remote farmhouse. This was my first voluntary experience with ants—I had eaten lots of them involuntarily, raw, when they just tasted sour—and soon we were talking about the general question of what people eat and do not eat. I remarked that in my country people ate the legs of frogs, the very thought of which horrified my ant-eating friends. It was rather as though



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we had been talking about repulsive sexual habits.

The question of what is repulsive and what is accepted or gratifying is certainly under strong cultural control with both food and sex. Look at the varying cultural attitudes toward kissing, for instance. What would a Micronesian think of the display near a girls' dormitory at an American university just before check-in time? Or how could one explain to a Micronesian the attitude of the American male toward the breasts of the female of the species?

The anthropologists have explained that the kinds of sexual behavior regarded as "perverse" vary greatly from culture to culture, but neither they nor the psychologists have bothered much about food perversions. Maybe we are surrounded by food perverts, undetected and unclassified, undermining the fiber of our civilization, infiltrating our diplomatic service, influencing our mass media, corrupting our youth. We need a Havelock Ellis to survey the field and a Kinsey to quantify it. Who knows how many people in this country put sugar in their salad dressings, make strawberry shortcake with sweet biscuit, use rice for dessert, or engage in similar abominable and unwholesome practices?

But one must not be culture-bound. Rice pudding is no crime against nature; it is merely a crime against the culture of people who believe that rice should be the basic starch of a meal rather than the dessert. If we tried to deal with such cultural traits as perverse we would get into endless trouble. We would be better off, I think, to define food perversion as food behavior not directed toward nutrition. The alleged custom of some ancient Romans taking an emetic so that they could feast again on the tongues of larks would thus truly be perverse.

Dirt-eating, since it seems often to be related to a mineral deficiency in the ordinary diet, would not be perverse by this definition. But the whole catalogue of substances that man takes for stimulation or hallucination or relaxation would represent perverse behavior. These substances may serve a greatly felt need, but the need can hardly be called nutritional. In many cases, the substances are clearly antinutritional: the chronic alcoholic suffers, it appears, mostly from nutritional deficiencies, and tobacco notoriously cuts down the desire for food.

It is curious how widely these nonnutritional substances are



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taken by man. It cannot be said that every culture has some drug to help its members escape from reality, but I would guess that the vast majority have, and of the most diverse sorts. The virtues of alcohol have been discovered independently by many peoples, and they have found many ways of producing the alcohol: through allowing the sweet sap of palms and other plants to ferment, through fermenting grains or fruits, through chewing starches (like manihot) and fermenting the saliva-mixed product. And primitive man ransacked the plant kingdom to find substances that could be drunk, chewed or inhaled for a lift, or for a temporary escape into the world of dreams.

These "perversities" may be accepted and institutionalized by the culture, or they may be suppressed or hidden or deplored—just as are the unreproductive sexual customs. Our own culture is quite confused in the matter, with every possible attitude represented somewhere. A few consistent extremists would suppress everything—tea, chocolate, coffee and the like. Tobacco and alcohol are subjects of eternal debate. Many of us still have vivid memories of our national experiment in the prohibition of alcohol. "Drugs" from marijuana to heroin are still prohibited, though a vocal minority maintains that prohibition is not the proper way to deal with the problem of drug addiction.

We can call all of these things, by definition, "perverse," but that still leaves open the question of whether they are "good" or "bad." There seems to be no way of arriving at opinion on this outside of the cultural context. We could, of course, equate "good" with "healthy," but we are still left with problems. All of these nonnutritional food substances could probably be shown to be unhealthy in a physiological sense, or at best harmless. But physiology isn't everything. The Andean Indian apparently needs the lift from chewing his coca leaves to help him get through the arduous days of his bleak environment. I seem to need the lift of tobacco to get through my days, even though I am not exposed to the physical discomfort of the Indian. How do we balance the physiological loss against the psychological gain?

There are similar problems in the evaluation of sex habits. If we define as perverse all sexual behavior not directed toward reproduction, we include masturbation, homosexuality, bestiality,



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voyeurism and the like; but we also necessarily include all contraceptive practices. Again there is an extreme but consistent view that would regard all of these as "bad" and another extreme that would regard none as bad except where innocent individuals are hurt.

In both sex and food it is clear that adult human behavior is largely a result of a conditioning or learning process. There must be basic, underlying drives for sex outlet—to use Kinsey's term—and for food intake, but it is hard to dissect away the cultural overlay to demonstrate this biological basis. In the case of sex, experiments with chimpanzees at the Yerkes Laboratory show that the adult behavior patterns of individuals are learned. It is possible to make a nice sequence from animals like rats and mice, where learning is only of slight importance in copulatory behavior, through dogs and monkeys, where learning is more important, to the great apes, where learning is necessary for successful copulation.

Food behavior probably shows a similar sequence in the importance of learning, though I do not know of much good experimental evidence. I suspect that even in man there is left over an "instinctive" aversion to very bitter things, a reaction that would be of value in avoiding poisons. But we put bitters in our Old Fashioneds! There seems also to be a general aversion to some kinds of smells in association with food; yet some very nasty-smelling cheeses are eaten, as well as certain stinking fruits like the famous durian of tropical Asia.

Interesting individual and cultural differences are shown in whether particular foodstuffs are eaten raw or cooked, alive or dead. In general, only mute things are eaten alive—plants and invertebrates. If oysters shrieked as they were pried open, or squealed when jabbed with a fork, they would never be eaten alive. As it is, thoughtful people quite callously look for the muscular twitch as they drop lemon juice on a poor oyster to be sure that it is alive before they eat it.

The moral problem of killing for food leads many people to vegetarianism. But as Samuel Butler long ago pointed out, vegetables should have rights, too. The Erewhonians reached the logical end of the moral argument when they were reduced to eating cabbages certified to have died a natural death.



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There are numerous vegetarian subcultures, especially in Indian civilization and in our own, but voluntary avoidance of meat seems to be limited to groups within such "high" cultures. A goodly proportion of mankind lives on a largely vegetarian diet, but this is perforce because meat is scarce or too expensive. At the other extreme, Eskimos eat meat exclusively. The primates —the monkeys and apes—are generally vegetarian or, at most, eaters of insects and similar small prey. The adoption of the carnivorous habit was probably one of the major steps in human evolution, especially since hunting, by such a feeble creature as man, must have at the same time involved tool-using and group-coöperation, providing a base for man's social evolution.

Vegetarianism now is frequently linked with religious considerations of one kind or another. It is curious how frequently food habits or food restrictions are associated with religion. This provides another of the parallels between food and sex, since sex also gets involved with religion in the most diverse sorts of ways. There is an elemental difference between food and sex, in that an individual can refrain completely from sexual activity and still live. Chastity can thus be a lifetime preoccupation, while fasting is necessarily either of short duration or intermittent.

I suspect that lifetime chastity, the cult of virginity, is a characteristic of the sophisticated and complex cultures that we call civilizations: it would hardly seem either possible or worth while to the more primitive cultures closer to nature. Yet such cultures do have a variety of religious controls over sexual behavior. Sex may be taboo before or during special activities such as fishing, hunting or war. Sex may be required in relation to ceremonies to insure fertility of crops. Either food or sex may get involved in ideas of sacrifice, and the sacrifice may involve either abstention or indulgence. Thus we find cults of temple prostitution on the one hand, and of chastity on the other; ceremonies which require that no food be eaten, and others at which participants must eat.

In sophisticated situations, at least, one can understand social and religious control of sexual and food behavior in terms of man's efforts to master his appetites, and thus to master himself. Neither the glutton nor the libertine cuts a very admirable figure in terms of the moral or aesthetic values of most high cultures. European



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culture in particular has kept the Greek ideal of moderation, of temperance, though sometimes carrying temperance itself to an unaesthetic excess in the puritan or the prude.

In religious and social control of food and sex, we are dealing with deliberate, in a sense voluntary, abstentions and indulgences. There may also be involuntary controls, perhaps more frequently with food than with sex. We have chronic undernourishment and malnutrition in many human situations simply because food is not available. And there is, through history, a long succession of famines, of epidemic, involuntary fasting on the part of large segments of mankind. It is more difficult to find examples of epidemic, involuntary chastity; although, as a friend pointed out to me, this has occurred in certain situations like the gold rush to the western United States in the last century. The prostitution that builds up under such circumstances could be regarded as only a partial alleviation, such as the hoarding and black markets accompanying famines.

This makes me wonder whether the selling of sex or the selling of food is the older profession. It is a meaningless sort of question, of course, since both food and sex were commonly exchanged long before any idea of "sale" developed. From the accounts of the European explorers who first encountered the primitive peoples of the modern world, I judge that the ideas of selling either fruits and vegetables or the services of women were taken up with about equal alacrity—or reluctance. Where the natives were reluctant, these civilized Europeans seem to have had little compunction about commandeering either the food or the women.

On the other hand, both food and sex are widely linked with the idea of hospitality: the welcomed stranger is offered something to eat and someone to sleep with. This can be embarrassing in both cases if he is a fussy feeder and finds the proffered food repugnant, or if, for cultural or aesthetic reasons, he is fussy about his women. Still, sharing a hard-won food supply or a treasured wife is surely the ultimate in friendly gestures.

In general, the question of who eats with whom and who sleeps with whom can become quite complicated, subject to all sorts of different kinds of cultural restrictions. There seems to be one cultural universal in sex that has no universal parallel in food—the



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presence of some kind of an incest taboo. But I suspect that food restriction or regulation is more elaborate and more rigid than sex regulation. This is apparent in our own culture: the stereotyped Southerner would hardly be able to force himself to the indignity of eating with a colored woman; but often he seems to have had no compunction about sleeping with one.

Perhaps this a consequence of the fact that sex is secret in our culture and eating is open. The Southerner would not marry a Negro any more than he would eat with her; and perhaps he would not mind sharing grits and salt pork with her if he were sure he would not be caught. On the other hand, there may be public consequences of the sexual communion, in the form of offspring, which seem to carry no particular stigma for the male concerned.

In some cultures, eating is a secret act. Many years ago A. E. Crawley, in *The Mystic Rose,* developed a theory that it is a sort of basic element of human nature to carry out all of the primary biological functions—eating, copulating, excreting—in solitude. If this is so, then eating has certainly come out into the open more generally than either the copulatory or excretory functions, but it is still rather rigidly controlled. Often men are prohibited from eating with women; different social castes and social classes are very generally prohibited from eating together; children, in some subcultures of our civilization, may not be allowed to eat with grown-ups until they have reached adolescence.

And then there is the endlessly complicated matter of the etiquette of eating: what is eaten, how it is eaten, when it is eaten, what clothes are worn for the eating, whether talk is prohibited or required while eating. When one looks at all of the complications, it is a wonder that man has been able to feed himself at all; but it is also a wonder, in view of the complications, that he has been able to reproduce. In general, man seems to have gotten along fairly well on both counts, although it may be only in terms of a certain psychic cost.



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# Equality

## America's Deferred Commitment

C. VANN WOODWARD

NOW THAT THE DRIVE IS ON to give accustomed cant about equality some basis in fact and to deliver on promises nearly a century old, the temptation is strong to pretend that we have been in earnest all along. Such a pretense, successfully maintained, might stiffen resolution, put the forces of resistance further on the defensive and, in general, further a good cause. Before we become so deeply committed to the pretense that we believe it ourselves, however, it would be well to look soberly into the curious origins of the commitment to equality during the Civil War and into its subsequent abandonment.

The North had a much more difficult time defining its war aims than the South. The aims of the South were fixed and obvious from the start—the establishment and the defense of independence—and they remained constant until rendered hopeless. The North moved gradually and gropingly toward a definition of its war aims. Its progress was obstructed by doubt and misgiving and characterized by much backing and filling. The debate and the outcome were shaped by the course of the war itself, by military necessities, foreign propaganda needs and domestic morale demands, as well as by the exigencies of party politics and political ambitions.

As the North progressed toward the framing of war objectives, America was inched along from right to left. It moved from hesitant support of a limited war with essentially negative aims toward

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This article is derived from a lecture presented during a conference on the Civil War, held at Gettysburg College in November of 1957 as the concluding feature of its 125th anniversary celebration.



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a total war with positive and revolutionary aims. The character of the war changed from a pragmatic struggle for power to a crusade for ideals. The struggle took on many aspects of an ideological war, and in some minds became a holy war, fought and financed and supported by men who could feel themselves instruments of divine will.

It was far different at the outset. Lincoln was inaugurated President of a slaveholding republic. He had been elected on a platform firmly pledging him to the protection of the institution of slavery where it existed; and in his first inaugural address, while not abandoning his moral views of slavery, he explicitly denied that he entertained any "purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the states where it exists." Not only had he no purpose, but he declared he had "no lawful right" and, indeed, "no inclination to do so." He assured the people of the South that their property was not "in any wise endangered by the now incoming administration." His emphasis was upon the negative aim of preventing secession and the disruption of the Union.

Four and a half months later, after blood had been shed and the war was in full swing, Congress took a hand in defining war aims. On July 22, the House adopted, with only two negative votes, a resolution declaring that "this war is not waged . . . [for the] purpose of overthrowing or interfering with the . . . established institutions of those States, but to . . . maintain . . . the . . . States unimpaired; and that as soon as these objects are accomplished the war ought to cease." The Senate backed this sentiment up with a similar resolution, also adopted by a nearly unanimous vote. At this stage, so far as both President and Congress were able to formulate war aims, this was a war of narrowly limited objectives and no revolutionary purpose. It was to be a war against secession, a war to maintain the Union—that, and nothing more.

This negative phase did not last long. No mood lasted very long in the flux and change of the Civil War. Five months later the House voted down a motion to reaffirm the resolution of limited war aims. Already the movement was under way to extend those aims from mere union to embrace freedom as well. The second



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war aim was not attained by a stroke of Lincoln's pen, as Lincoln was the first to admit. It was forced by events, by necessities; and those events and necessities first took the shape of thousands of pitiable fugitive slaves crowding into the Union lines. Their path toward freedom was tedious and rugged and filled with obstacles. Thousands wavered between freedom and slavery for years and were never quite sure when freedom came, or even if it did. The majority only began their struggle for freedom after the war was over.

Freedom as a war aim was arrived at by a long succession of piecemeal decisions. There were orders by field commanders, some countermanded, some sustained; there were acts of state legislatures; and there was a long succession of bits and driblets of emancipation enacted by Congress, which did not get around to repealing the Fugitive Slave Act until June of 1864. And always there was the embarrassed and reluctant dragon of emancipation, the invading army. "Although war has not been waged against slavery," wrote Secretary Seward to Charles Francis Adams in 1862, "yet the army acts . . . as an emancipating crusade. To proclaim the crusade is unnecessary. . . ."

The crusade was eventually proclaimed, though the proclamation was not the President's. Lincoln never wanted to turn the war into a moral crusade. It is not necessary to retrace here the painful steps by which Lincoln arrived at his numerous decisions upon slavery and emancipation. It is sometimes forgotten, however, how often he deprecated the importance of his Proclamation of Emancipation. He characterized it as a war necessity, forced by events, ineffectual, inadequate and of doubtful legality. It is plain that his heart was in his plan for gradual emancipation, which he repeatedly but unsuccessfully urged upon Congress and proposed as a constitutional amendment. This was an extremely conservative plan for gradual and voluntary emancipation over a period of thirty-seven years, to be completed by 1900, to be administered by the slave states themselves, and to be assisted by the federal government with compensation to the slaveowners and foreign colonization of the freedmen. Support was not forthcoming, and war developments underlined the impracticality of the plan.



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When Lincoln finally resorted to the proclamation he presented it as a war measure, authorized by war powers and justified by military necessity. Again and again he repeated that it was a means to an end—the limited Lincolnian end of union—and not an end in itself, that union and not freedom was the true war aim. Yet freedom had become a second war aim anyway, and for many the primary war aim. In spite of the fact that the proclamation emancipated no slaves it had a profound effect upon the war—more effect upon the war, in fact, than upon slavery.

For one thing, it helped to elevate the war to a new plane. It was still a war for union, but not a war for union with slavery as before. It was no longer merely a war against something, but a war for something, a war for something greatly cherished in American tradition and creed—a war for freedom. What had started as a war for political ends had, by virtue of military necessity, undergone a metamorphosis into a higher and finer thing, a war for moral ends. What had commenced as a police action had been converted into a crusade. Some abolitionists professed disappointment in the proclamation, but so ardent a believer as Theodore Tilton was in "a bewilderment of joy" with the new spirit "so racing up and down and through my blood that I am half crazy with enthusiasm."

The great majority of citizens in the North still abhorred any association with abolitionists, but they were now free to share the forbidden transports of the despised radicals at no cost to their reputation whatever. Conservative, humdrum, unheroic millions could now sing "John Brown's Body" in naïve identification with the demented old hero and partake vicariously and quite inexpensively of his martyrdom. An aura of glory descended upon the common cause that sometimes lifted men out of themselves, exalted them, though it seems to have inspired civilians and noncombatants more often than soldiers. It could endow men with a sense of moral superiority and divine purpose that enabled them to regard the enemy with a new indignation and righteousness. It emboldened them to make messianic pronouncements with no apparent self-consciousness. The exuberant religiosity of the age was tapped for war propaganda and yielded riches. How otherwise could men, with no consciousness of blasphemy, lift their voices



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to sing, "As He died to make men holy, let us die to make men free"?

Before he issued the proclamation Lincoln had written privately that he was holding the antislavery pressure "within bounds." He could no longer make that boast with assurance, for after the edict of January 1, 1863, antislavery sentiment could not always be kept in bounds. As Professor Randall put it, "The concomitants of emancipation got out of Lincoln's hands. He could issue his proclamation, but he could not control the radicals." The "concomitant" of the second war aim of freedom was a third—equality. No sooner was the Union officially committed to the second war aim than the drive was on for commitment to the third.

It cannot be said that this drive was as successful as the movement for freedom, nor that by the end of the war the country was committed to equality in the same degree it was to freedom. There was no equality proclamation to match the one for emancipation. The third war aim never gained from Lincoln even the qualified support he gave to abolition. Without Presidential blessing the commitment was eventually made, made piecemeal like that to freedom, and with full implications not spelled out until after the war, but it was made.

The formal commitment to the third war aim would never have been possible had the abolitionist minority not been able to appeal to more venerable and acceptable doctrine than their own. It would be preposterous to credit the abolitionists with surreptitiously introducing the idea of equality into America. The nation was born with the word on its tongue. The first of those "self-evident" truths of the Declaration of Independence was that "all men are created equal." Back of that was the heritage of natural rights doctrine, and back of that the great body of Christian dogma and the teaching that all men are equal in the sight of God.

There were, of course, less disinterested inducements in operation. If freedom was in part a military expedient, equality was in part a political and economic expedient. Equality of the franchise for freedmen was deemed essential to Republican supremacy, and Republican supremacy was deemed essential by influential classes to protect the new economic order.



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Equality was not only a political and economic expedient; it was also a psychological and religious one. For fulfillment of abolitionist purposes it was almost a necessity. Abolitionists had grounded their whole crusade against slavery on the proposition that it was a "sin." It is not sufficient simply to abolish a sin. It has to be expiated and the sinner purified. Purification and expiation involve penance and suffering. Equality had a punitive purpose: the infliction of a penance of humiliation upon the status of the sinner. For those with an uncomplicated interest in sheer vengeance upon a hated foe, equality had punitive uses of a simpler sort.

Even with all these resources at their command, however, the radicals could never have succeeded in their drive for the formal commitment to equality had it not been launched upon the mounting tide of war spirit and had the war not already been converted into a moral crusade. A moral crusade could only be justified by high moral aims, even if those aims were embraced by the great majority as an afterthought, by many with important mental reservations, and by others as expedients for extraneous ends having nothing whatever to do with the welfare of the freedmen.

So far as the abolitionist minority was concerned, the association of freedom and equality, as Jacobus tenBroek has demonstrated, was rooted in three decades of organized antislavery agitation. Antislavery congressmen carried this association of aims into the framing of the Thirteenth Amendment. The debates over the question in the Senate in the spring of 1864, and in the House of Representatives in January, 1865, contain evidence that the framers aimed at equality as well as emancipation. Both aims were assumed by the opponents as well as the sponsors of the amendment during the debate. As one of the supporters, William D. Kelley of Pennsylvania, put it: "The proposed Amendment is designed . . . to accomplish . . . the abolition of slavery in the United States, and the political and social elevation of Negroes to all the rights of white men." His broad construction of the amendment was echoed with variations by numerous supporters. They did not include enfranchisement among the rights of Negroes, but they specifically and repeatedly mentioned equal protection of the laws,



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safeguard for privileges and immunities, and guarantee against deprivation of life, liberty and property without due process of law. The main ground of opposition to the amendment was this very aim of equality. A constant complaint of opponents was that the amendment would not only free the Negroes but would "make them our equals before the law."

The broad construction of the Thirteenth Amendment to include equality as well as freedom was not sustained when put to test, and the radicals themselves abandoned the interpretation. But they did not abandon their aim of equality; instead, they increased the scope of it. Responding to provocation of Southern aggression against Negro rights and to inducement of political gains as well, they proceeded to make equality as much the law of the land as freedom. In the Civil Rights Act of 1866, they gave sweeping protection to the rights of Negroes as citizens, guaranteeing them "full and equal benefit of all laws and proceedings for security of person and property, as is enjoyed by white citizens," regardless of any law to the contrary. When the President vetoed the bill, they passed it over his veto. When doubt was cast upon its constitutionality, they enacted most of its provisions into the Fourteenth Amendment. When the South balked at ratification, they stipulated adoption of the amendment as a condition of readmission to the Union. Later they extended federal protection to the Negro franchise by the Fifteenth Amendment. They re-enacted the Civil Rights Act, implementing protection of voters, and followed that by another bill to implement rights established by the Fourteenth Amendment. To crown the achievement, they passed still another Civil Rights Act in 1875, which provided sweepingly that "all persons within the jurisdiction of the United States shall be entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of the accommodations, advantages, facilities, and privileges of inns, public conveyances on land or water, theatres, and other places of public amusement, subject only to the conditions and limitations established by law and applicable alike to citizens of every race and color, regardless of any previous condition of servitude."

Thus, by every device of emphasis, repetition, re-enactment and reiteration, the radical lawmakers and constitution-amenders



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would seem to have nailed down all loose ends, banished all ambiguity, and left no doubt whatever about their intention to extend federal protection to Negro equality. So far as it was humanly possible to do so by statute and constitutional amendment, America would seem to have been firmly committed to the principle of equality.

And yet we know that within a very short time after these imposing commitments were made they were broken. America reneged, shrugged off the obligation, and all but forgot about it for nearly a century. The commitments to the war aims of union and freedom were duly honored, but not the third commitment. In view of current concern over the default and the belated effort to make amends, it might be of interest to inquire how and why it ever occurred.

Equality was a far more revolutionary aim than freedom, though it may not have seemed so at first. Slavery seemed so formidable, so powerfully entrenched in law and property, and so fiercely defended by arms that it appeared far the greater obstacle. Yet slavery was property based on law. The law could be changed and the property expropriated, but not so inequality. Its entrenchments were deeper and subtler. The attainment of equality involved many more relationships than those between master and slave. It was a revolution that was not confined to the boundaries of the defeated and discredited South, as emancipation largely was. It was a revolution for the North as well. It involved such unpredictable and biased people as hotel clerks, railroad conductors, steamboat stewards, theater ushers, real estate agents, and policemen. In fact it could involve almost anybody. It was clear from its start that this revolution was going to require enthusiastic and widespread support in the North to make it work.

Was there any such support? Who were the American people so firmly committed to this revolutionary change and what degree of enthusiastic support were they prepared to lend it? For one thing, among the supporters of the Union were the people of the border area, which included not only Kentucky, Missouri and West Virginia, but also the southern parts of Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. This area embraced a white population approximately



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equal to the number of whites in the Confederate States. And if Maryland be added, as I think it should be, the area included considerably more white people than the Confederacy. Most of these people were still living in slave states during the war, and many of their attitudes and habits were not very different from those of people in states to the south. Their enthusiasm for the third war aim was a matter of some doubt.

What of the Republican party itself, the party responsible for enacting the commitment to equality? During the war it was, of course, exclusively a sectional party, a party of Northern people. Its membership was heavily recruited from the defunct Whig party, and the new party never shook off its Whiggish origins. Many of its members, to use Lincoln's phrase, disliked being "unwhigged." The essence of Whiggery was accommodation and compromise, compromise of many kinds, including the old type of sectional compromise. Before Reconstruction was over, Republicans were again seeking out their old Whig friends of the South with proffered compromise that would leave the solution of the race question in Southern hands.

Lincoln was fully aware of the limited moral resources of his party and his section of the country. He knew that there were limits beyond which popular conviction and conscience could not be pushed in his time. Whatever his personal convictions—and he may, as one historian has maintained, have been entirely color blind—yet when he spoke as President of the United States or as leader of his political party, he spoke with measured words. And he did not speak in one way to Negroes and another to whites. To a delegation of Negro leaders at the White House he said: "There is an unwillingness on the part of our people, harsh as it may be, for you free colored people to remain with us." He expressed deep sympathy for the wrongs done to them as slaves. "But even when you cease to be slaves," he said, "you are yet far removed from being placed on an equality with the white race. . . . The aspiration of men is to enjoy equality with the best when free, but on this broad continent not a single man of your race is made the equal of a single man of ours. . . . I cannot alter it if I would. It is a fact. . . . It is better for us both, therefore, to be separated." This idea of



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separating the races led Lincoln to support the most impractical and illusory plan of his entire career, the plan for colonizing the freedmen abroad or settling them in segregated colonies at home.

What were the sentiments of the Federal army, the army of liberation, about the issue of equality? That great body included eventually more than two million men. There appears to have been a lower proportion of men from the upper income and social classes in the Federal than in the Confederate army. But there were men of all kinds and all views. Among them were officers and enlisted men of deep and abiding conviction, dedicated spirits whose devotion to the moral aims of the war was borne out in their conduct and in their treatment of slaves, freedmen and Negro soldiers.

Unfortunately it cannot be said that soldiers of this turn of mind were typical of the army sentiment, or even that they were very numerous. They seem, on the contrary, to have been quite untypical. "One who reads letters and diaries of Union soldiers," writes Professor Bell I. Wiley, who has indeed read many of them, "encounters an enormous amount of antipathy toward Negroes. Expressions of unfriendliness range from blunt statements bespeaking intense hatred to belittling remarks concerning dress and demeanor." Many of the Union soldiers brought their race prejudices with them from civilian life. Sometimes these prejudices were mitigated by contact with the Negro, but more often they appear to have been intensified and augmented by army experience. Men who endure the hardships and suffering and boredom of war have always sought scapegoats on whom to heap their miseries. And in the Civil War the Negroes who crowded into Union lines were made to order for the role of scapegoat. The treatment they often received at the hands of their liberators makes some of the darkest pages of war history. Another shameful chapter is the treatment of the 200,000 Negroes who served in the Union army. Enlistment of Negroes in the first place appears to have been strongly opposed by the great majority of white troops. And even after their battle record proved, as Dudley T. Cornish says, "that Negro soldiers measured up to the standard set for American soldiers generally," they continued to be discriminated against by unequal pay, allowances and opportunities. These inequalities



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lasted throughout the war. It would seem at times that the army of liberation marched southward on its crusade under the banner of White Supremacy.

One is driven by the evidence to the conclusion that the radicals committed the country to a guarantee of equality that popular convictions were not prepared to sustain, that legal commitments overreached moral persuasion. The lag between conviction and commitment could be illustrated by many more examples than space allows. Such examples would include race riots and violent labor demonstrations against the Negro that broke out during the war in Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago, Detroit, Buffalo, Albany, Brooklyn and New York. The tendency would also be illustrated by the neglect, exclusion or hostility that craft unions and national unions exhibited toward the Negro during the war years and afterward. Further illustration could be drawn from the measures adopted by Western states to discourage freedmen from settling and working within their boundaries or going to school with their children. One should also recall that between 1865 and 1868, by legislative or popular vote, Negro suffrage was rejected by the states of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Connecticut, Nebraska, New Jersey, Ohio, Michigan and Pennsylvania. The Republican party thought it advisable to assure the people of the North in a plank of its platform of 1868 that while Negro suffrage had already been imposed upon the Southern states, where it was "demanded by every consideration of public safety, of gratitude and of justice," the question of Negro suffrage in the Northern states "properly belongs to the people of those states."

In concentrating upon the North as a source of illustration of this moral lag in equality, I have certainly not intended to suggest that it was peculiar to the North. I have taken agreement for granted that the lag was even greater in the South and that resistance to fulfillment of the commitment was in that area even more widespread, stubborn and effective. It has been my intention, however, to suggest that the lag was not peculiar to the South.

When such a lag develops between popular convictions and constitutional commitments, and when that lag cannot be conveniently rationalized by statutory or amendatory procedures, it be-



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comes the embarrassing task of the Supreme Court of the United States to square ideals with practice, to effect a rationalization. The justices in this instance examined the words of the Fourteenth Amendment and, by what Justice Harlan in a famous dissenting opinion called "subtle and ingenious verbal criticism," discovered that they did not mean what they seemed to mean at all, nor what their authors thought they meant. By a series of opinions beginning in 1873, the court constricted the Fourteenth Amendment by a narrow interpretation that proclaimed that the privileges and immunities we call civil rights were not placed under federal protection at all. In effect, they found that the commitment to equality had never really been made.

The Union fought the Civil War on borrowed moral capital. With their noble belief in their purpose and their extravagant faith in the future, the radicals ran up a staggering war debt, a moral debt that was soon found to be beyond the country's capacity to pay, given the undeveloped state of its moral resources at the time. After making a few token payments during Reconstruction, the United States defaulted on the debt and unilaterally declared a moratorium that lasted more than eight decades. The country was only nominally spared the formality of bankruptcy by the injunctions of the Supreme Court that cast doubt upon the validity of the debt. In the meantime, over the years, interest on the debt accumulated. The debt was further augmented by the shabby treatment of the forgotten creditors, our own Negro citizens.

Then in the middle of the twentieth century, conscience finally began to catch up with commitment. Very suddenly, relatively speaking, it became clear that the almost forgotten Civil War debt had to be paid, paid in full, and without any more stalling than was necessary. As in the case of the commitment to emancipation during the Civil War, amoral forces and pressures such as the exigencies of foreign propaganda, power politics and military necessities exercised a powerful influence upon the recommitment to equality. But also as in the case of emancipation, the voices of conscience, of national creed and of religious conviction played their part. In the second instance, the demands of the Negroes themselves played a more important part in the pressure than before.



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Equality was at last an idea whose time, long deferred, had come about.

Once again a lag had developed between popular conviction and constitutional interpretation. Only this time the lag ran the opposite way and it was the Constitution that lagged behind conviction. Again it proved unfeasible to close the gap by statutory or amendatory procedures. And again it became the embarrassing task of the Supreme Court to effect an accommodation, a rationalization. Once more the justices scrutinized the words of the Fourteenth Amendment, and this time they discovered that those words really meant what they said, and presumably had all along. The old debt that the court had once declared invalid they now pronounced valid.

Although this was acknowledged to be a national debt, in the nature of things it would have to be paid by a special levy that fell with disproportionate heaviness upon one section of the country. The South had been called upon before to bear the brunt of a guilty national conscience. It is now called upon a second time. One could hope that the South's experience in these matters might stand it in good stead, that having learned to swallow its own words before, it might do so again with better grace, that it might perform what is required of it with forbearance and humility. I do not know. I can only admit that present indications are far from reassuring.

There is no apparent prospect of early compliance or of easy solution. The white South is resisting, and a reactionary part of it is defiant. The resistance is stubborn. A minority could become nasty and its defiance brutish. Already the patience of the rest of the country is running out. There is an outraged sense of frustration and a demand that there be no more faltering. The taunts and jeers of our foreign adversaries are a provocation, and so are the partisan rivalries of politicians. The demand for stern measure and the use of armed force is growing. An example has already been set, and more could follow. The center of resistance has not yet been seriously challenged, and when it is, the prospect is likely to grow even darker. These are facts that no one can contemplate soberly without a sense of foreboding.



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We are presently approaching the centennial anniversary of the Civil War. Simultaneously we are approaching the climax of a new sectional crisis. It is a crisis that divides the country along much the same old sectional lines, over many of the same old sectional issues. It would be an ironic, a tragic coincidence if the celebration of the anniversary took place in the midst of a crisis reminiscent of the one celebrated.

The historian who, in these circumstances, writes the commemorative volumes for the Civil War centennial would seem to have a special obligation of sobriety and fidelity to the record. If he writes in that spirit he will not flatter the self-righteousness of either side. He will not picture the North as burning for equality since 1863 with a hard, gem-like flame. He will not picture the South as fighting for the eternal verities. He will not paint a holy war that ennobled its participants. And he will try to keep in mind the humility that prevented the central figure in the drama from ever falling in with the notion that he was the incarnation of the Archangel Michael.



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# College Students and Reading

RALPH E. ELLSWORTH

THERE NOW SEEMS TO BE A RATHER GENERAL AGREEMENT that students read few books while they are in college, and even fewer after they graduate. Gallup polls substantiate this,[1] and Russell Lynes's report on the reading habits of the Yale class of 1932 reveals much the same picture for the graduates of one of the colleges where all the factors that should lead to good reading habits are optimum.[2] In pre-sputnik days this evidence of nonintellectualism seemed sufficiently important to be mentioned only by commencement speakers who were hard pressed for something to say. But now that our general perspective on education is changing, everyone is asking why the taxpayer should support an expensive system of college education if its graduates do not learn, through the reading of important books, how to contribute more to society than the adults who have not attended college. The question is a fair one.

I am quite sure that if a careful, historical comparison were made between the ability of today's college students to extract information from print with that of students of fifty years ago, we would be amazed by the capabilities of our young people. Most graduates of large high schools now come to college well equipped to use library indexes and catalogues, and many are still given substantial instruction on term paper writing during their freshman

1 "Low Readership Level in U. S. Shown by Gallup Poll," and "One in Five Read Books," *Publishers' Weekly*, February 11, 1950.

2 "Desire Out From Under the Elms," *Harper's*, July, 1957.

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Mr. Ellsworth's article is based on a paper prepared for the National Conference on the Undergraduate and the Lifetime Reading Interest, sponsored by the University of Michigan and the National Book Committee and held at Ann Arbor this year. A volume developed from the conference is to be published by the University of Michigan Press.



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year. University reference librarians will testify that students of today are so much more sophisticated in their technical ability to read and write reports that they cannot be measured on the same scale with their predecessors. To be sure, their knowledge of literary masterpieces is not so extensive. They do not read as many unassigned books while in college as did their grandfathers. And it may be that they cannot sprinkle their writing with literary quotations, spell, or write clearly and beautifully. But of this there is no question—today's students possess a technical skill in handling the literature of knowledge that is without precedent.

The background for this competence lies in the fact that analysts of the reading process, like Gray of Chicago, have in the last twenty-five years learned how to teach children to read with a much higher degree of success than was possible a generation ago. In addition, well-developed libraries in the generally improved public and private schools have exposed children to a wider range of books and other materials than was available in the secondary schools of fifty years ago.

Why then, in spite of the fact that students come to college better able to read and more experienced in the skills of reading, do they read so little beyond inescapable assignments, and practically stop reading once they leave the campus with a degree?

I am prepared to defend the thesis that their reading behavior as adults is at fault because of four factors: the nature of our culture, particularly our popular culture; the crowding out of an intellectual climate in the college by a vocational or professional climate; the teaching methods college faculties use, or are forced to use, which kill real intellectual development; and, as a result of the instability of our society, the present college generation's rejection of the heritage the older generation tries to pass on to it.

Let us first look at our culture. It is not a reading culture, and it does not bestow its rewards on the reader, with the exception of those few who are satisfied with the spiritual rewards found in teaching or preaching. The quick, big money goes to those who offer something unique and sensational in the entertainment world (for example, Bing Crosby, Elvis Presley, Jack Benny or Miss Monroe), for which the intellectual life is not essential, or to those



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who gain power or control in finance and business through methods that appear to young people (probably because of the mores of the advertising industry) to be based less on virtue and solid effort than on chance and trickery. The roads to fortune in common use today do not involve the intellectual process or reading of a high, cultural level. Note in the TV dramas, for instance, that the symbols for suggesting success are never the reading of a book or the ability to handle an idea requiring more than six words for expression. Success is indicated by the possession of an expensive car, a large house, a young and slender wife, or by the practiced use of the whisky bottle and the talents of a public relations expert. Hints that the successful man has consulted a psychiatrist are frequently employed, thus implying that TV writers think the American public expects its heroes to be a bit mentally ill, as well as grossly overworked physically—behavior that is not usually associated with the well-educated, mature, disciplined man of the nineteenth century.

The accumulated knowledge displayed on television quiz programs by such persons as Nadler or Van Doren is, of course, greatly admired by the American public, but not nearly so much as little Robert Strom's ability to think with the tools of science. The public knows that when Robert grows up, he and his kind will take us to the moon (if we are not there by the time this article appears), will find a cure for cancer, a cheap way of utilizing sea water, and a safe way of disposing of atomic waste. Nobody cares about Robert Strom's general, cultural reading or, indeed, that of Teller, Von Braun, Fermi, Oppenheimer, Bohr or their Russian counterparts. One can become a great scientist and make powerful bombs and rockets without being a reader of fine novels and plays or history. Knowledge, scientific knowledge, is manna to our society; humanistic learning is not. And to think that youth will forego acting like a scientist in favor of a nineteenth-century English gentleman, even in reading habits, is to walk with one's head in the clouds. It is to the physicist not the philosopher, to Kinsey not St. Paul, that our people turn for guidance. The knowledge they want is frequently more easily obtained from nonbook sources than from books.

And here is the storm center of our worst fears. The best of



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our scientists and the wisest of our nonscientists know that science as it is today, not what it may be a hundred years from now, cannot be applied to the toughest and most critical problems we face. If only we could be sure of the Russians' intentions, and if they could trust ours, we might view the problem of getting into outer space as important and interesting but not critical. We might be able to persuade the Robert Stroms to devote their lives to fundamental research in the behavioral sciences in an attempt to find out how to teach man to live happily with other men and with himself, which is the big problem for twentieth-century man.

Those who lament the lack of widespread book reading are forgetting, to some extent, that the younger generation today does not turn to traditional, humanistic knowledge for wisdom and guidance, that it has a basic distrust of any statement not proved by science. These young people distrust the whole Western humanistic culture that we older people take for granted, and they show little enthusiasm for reading the books that carry this culture.

Can we blame them? As an eighteen-year-old sees it, the old values have not worked. He measures these values not against the progress that has been made by civilization, but against absolute standards of perfection. Quick annihilation stares him in the face, and he knows it. One too many cocktails for Khrushchev, and everything could be lost. The youth of today resents the obvious failure of Western civilization to produce a stable way of life. He will read the old books when he is required to do so, but not before.

Consider the intellectual climate in most of our colleges today. Fifty years ago it was assumed that the American college and university educated a limited number of students for an intellectual life in the professions that could be learned only from the mastering of many books. There was a commitment to read in all of them. Although this vigorous intellectual training is still there today, to it has been grafted a wide variety of special vocational and professional programs that do not pretend to be intellectual in content and do not carry the serious reading commitment that would develop substantial reading habits carrying over into adult life. Except for the vocational reading done by graduates of such programs, or the prestige reading one's social relationships force, it is



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unreasonable to expect today's students to be book readers for the simple reason that their college experience creates no strong intellectual appetite in them while they are in college. No one, surely, thinks that reading behavior can rise higher in the individual than his motivations.

One of the problems with these programs is not so much a low requirement for wide reading, although even this is true in the science courses, but that the materials read are sterile and lifeless. They do not have in them the magical quality of generating intellectual curiosity. They offer no challenge, no vistas. They are not the books one takes to bed to read. Another problem is the type of faculty these programs attract. Many of these men have been trained in the same kind of narrow, restrictive professional subjects, and they, like the materials, are dull and lifeless. They motivate no brain-stretching, no yearning for learning for its own sake. Beyond their narrow professional competence, they are as undisciplined as the average high school graduate.

Many people, both within and without the colleges and universities, are dissatisfied with the number of intellectually barren courses that are offered, but I see little evidence that anyone is going to do much about this. There are too many vested interests in the department heads and deans who know that large enrollments in their areas determine salary levels, the number of graduate assistants and other forms of cheap labor that free the senior professors for research. And, of course, one way to keep the enrollment high is to increase the course offerings. (Look, for instance, at the number of courses listed under journalism, personnel psychology, accounting, education, nursing, library science, sociology, public administration, et cetera, in the big state universities.) The top brass in the universities seem to be unable, although they try, to think of any good arguments to use in wringing the water out of the curriculum, just as they seem to be unable to control intercollegiate athletics. The sputnik is the best weapon they have had in years, and they are using it with some good results, but the inertia to be overcome is enormous.

The teaching methods commonly used in colleges and universities too frequently produce nonreaders. Many courses are taught



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through a combination of formal class lectures and specific reading assignments in fairly rigid textbooks, just as they were before the rotary press made books plentiful. The professor who uses the lecture-textbook method is not concerned with the reading habits his method produces. He is concerned with the problem of teaching knowledge that his students can use in more advanced courses. Such courses are not intended to produce readers, and they certainly do not. A more serious result is that they do not require any real mental exertion on the part of the student. The thinking has been done by the professor and the author of the textbook. Oscar Handlin has commented on this situation with the same conclusion.[3] The student is given no contact with source material, and so he does not learn what it means to evaluate facts and to draw conclusions from them. He merely learns the facts and principles others have developed from source materials. If this method of teaching were used only in introductory courses, the situation would not be so bad. But this is not the case; it permeates the entire college. This method does not teach students to develop judgment or taste in books for the very simple reason that it allows them no practice in handling or reading books. Why bother with reading several books if one textbook can present an adequate summary of current knowledge?

Reliance on the crutches of class lectures or on textbooks and other forms of passive learning is the worst possible kind of preparation for adult life in the America of today. Everyone is bombarded with one-sided, direct pressure statements in the form of magazines, radio and TV programs, house and trade journals, pamphlets and the like, and there is no professor around to say what the correct line is. He who has not formed the habit of evaluating sources is quite likely to be at the mercy of the special pleader.

Deans and other administrators seem to be eager to improve the quality of college teaching, but it is my observation that they usually place the kudos on the professors who do the best lecturing, which usually means the ones who organize and present the material so well that the students have to do almost no reading. The stultifying effect on the student has not seemed to worry profes-

[3] "Textbooks That Don't Teach," *Atlantic Monthly*, December, 1957.



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sors because they do not really know very much about the reading behavior of students, and they care less. Neither do most of them think very much about the effect of their methods on the preparation of the good citizen. They concentrate on the short-term objectives of their courses. It is only in the honors programs, limited to a few students, that undergraduates are placed in a learning situation where they are forced to develop judgment and taste in the handling of the literature of knowledge.

If we librarians are at fault in this matter of reading, it is in that we should have been shouting loudly that there was something wrong with teaching methods and with the point of view of professors. I know what professors think of this charge. They say that their main concern must be research, that their advancement depends on publication, and that they would have no time for research if they used inductive methods of teaching undergraduates. They would also say that our libraries could not hold up their end of such teaching procedures. They may be right, but that does not lessen the damage done to students.

I am equally concerned that in the big universities the writing of term papers, or any other kind of writing, is almost a thing of the past for undergraduates. Traditionally, it has been the term paper that has driven the student into books on an extensive scale. Many faculties have given up the term paper requirements because they no longer have time to read the papers and because they cannot spend the effort that would be required to detect plagiarism and other forms of student laziness. I know of no substitute for the term paper in motivating reading or in teaching students the virtues of inductive learning in nonlaboratory courses.

We librarians should also have been screaming to the high heavens about the devastating effects that the so-called objective, true-false examinations are having on student reading and writing. If I am accused of flogging a dead horse, I deny that the horse is dead. In the rooms of a university library where reserve books are being read, one can see that students have definite ideas about how to study for these examinations. They think it is better to memorize a small amount of text than it is to read widely and comparatively, and to do their reading just before the examination, on the assumption that it is a test of memory plus luck anyway. Therefore, read-



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ing is concentrated into a two-week period just before examinations, and "life adjustment" activities are indulged in the rest of the time.

Everyone agrees that grading essay examination papers is a very subjective business and that the objective examinations are impartial. We also know that the latter can be graded on machines, thus saving faculty time for research and reading. But if it is true that, with all their virtues, these examinations measure the least important part of learning and actually stultify the important parts, of what use is the impartiality or the faculty time thus saved?

Thus, I conclude that one of the worst obstacles to good reading is the faculty itself. As I watch the way in which they make their reading assignments, protect themselves from spending time with students so they can do their own research, use teaching methods that kill whatever natural desire for learning their students bring from high school, refuse to find out what college students are really like, refuse to set a good example by being good readers outside their own specialty, and refuse to believe that students can learn on their own outside the classroom, I reach the inescapable conclusion that we will never produce college graduates who will read as good citizens so long as undergraduates are taught by a faculty primarily interested in research, public service and committee assignments.

Before we are too quick to pass judgment on the lack of general, humanistic book reading among the young, we should realize that in a time of rapid and extensive social change, and in a time when the old values appear to have failed, young people will reject their cultural heritage and turn to themselves to work out their problems. Margaret Mead, speaking to this point in 1951, said:

We have come to realize that each generation in this country is sufficiently different from each other generation so that they are unknown to each other, and that you can't any longer find out what it is to be a teen-ager by remembering what it was like to have been one. . . .

The young people of today can live comfortably in a world we never knew if only we will let them be free to do so. They must form themselves. That is the whole meaning of an age that is changing so rapidly. Each group must work out its own salvation. . . .



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There are no books in our libraries that can tell the youth of 1958 how to shape their lives around sex, marriage, military service, a system of business that professes traditional honesty but practices trickery and frivolousness, a religion they cannot understand, or a civilization that may be blown up at any moment. The young must decide these things by talking with one another. And this they do. The student union building rather than the library has become the heart of the campus, because here the students gather to talk and learn from one another. In many American universities one will find more students in the union than in the library at any hour of the day. This may be chilling to the hearts of those who think books are the proper carriers of the advice of other generations and who assume that humanistic books are the best carriers; but it was they, not the youngsters, who created the kind of social conditions that are forcing the young to act in this way.

Intellectuals laugh at the "togetherness" slogan of one of the popular magazines, and they worry about the apparent conformity of young adults. They should show more understanding, because these are merely symbols for the manner in which young adults must find the answers to their problems in a society that expects them to find the answers in a heritage the young must reject. They will not read the books of the past because they distrust the past.

It may be that youth is wrong, and that by rejecting the best of their cultural heritage they will wreck themselves and our culture, but this is where the situation rests. The Kinsey reports on sexual behavior will have more influence in creating the new sexual ethics than will all the other books that have been written on the subject from the beginning of recorded history.

It follows, then, that no amount of preaching, wringing of hands, advertising or merchandising tricks will change the reading behavior of college students. This can be done only as we Americans develop a more sophisticated and spiritual set of cultural values, as the colleges and universities rid themselves of nonintellectual curricula and activities, as faculties are given permission and time to practice inductive teaching methods, and as the humanities and social sciences demonstrate that they, as well as the sciences, have valid answers to the questions our youth want answered.



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# *REappraisals*

## Machiavelli's *Prince*: Political Science or Political Satire?

GARRETT MATTINGLY

The reputation of Niccolò Machiavelli rests on a curious paradox, a paradox so conspicuous and so familiar that we have almost entirely forgotten it. After the collapse of the Florentine republic, which he had served faithfully for fourteen years, Machiavelli relieved the tedium of exile and idleness by taking up his pen. He wrote poems—verse, at least—and tales and plays, including one comedy which is a classic. But mostly he wrote about politics. He was mad about politics. He says in one of his letters that he had to talk about it; he could talk of nothing else. So, in short discourses and political fables, in a history of Florence, in a treatise on the art of war and, notably, in a series of discourses, nominally on the first ten books of Livy, he strove to pass on to his fellow countrymen the fruits of his experience, his reading and his meditation. These are solid works, earnest and thoughtful, often original and provocative. Scholars who have read them usually speak of them with great respect. But not many people ever look at them, and most of those who do have had their curiosity aroused by the one little book which everyone knows: *The Prince*.

*The Prince* is scarcely more than a pamphlet, a very minor fraction of its author's work, but it overshadows all the rest. Probably no book about politics was ever read more widely. Certainly none has been better known to people who have never read it. Everyone knows that Machiavelli recommended hypocrisy and ingratitude, meanness, cruelty and treachery as the traits proper to princes. Everyone recognizes "Machiavellian" as an adjective for political conduct that combines diabolical cunning with a ruthless disregard for moral standards. But *The Prince* obsesses historians and political philosophers who know a good deal more about it than that. Its burning prose still casts a lurid glow over the whole landscape of Renaissance Italy: historians who ought to know better call the whole period "the age of Machiavelli" and describe it as if it were chiefly characterized by the kind of behavior on which *The Prince* dwells; and philosophers, undertaking to describe Machiavelli's political thought, after carefully apprising their readers of the greater weight and complexity of the *Discorsi* and his other writings, end up by choosing half or more of their quotations from one slender volume. But *The Prince* is a short book, and most people remember short books better than long ones. Moreover, *The Prince* is easily Machiavelli's best prose. Its sentences are crisp and pointed, free from the parenthetical explanations and qualifying clauses that punctuate and clog his other political writings. Its prose combines verve and bite with a glittering, deadly polish, like the swordplay of a champion fencer. It uses apt, suggestive images, symbols packed with overtones. For instance: A prince should behave sometimes like a man, sometimes like a beast, and among beasts he should combine the traits of the lion and the fox. It is studded with epigrams like "A man will forget the death of his father sooner than

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the loss of his patrimony," epigrams which all seem to come out of some sort of philosophical Grand Guignol and, like the savage ironies of Swift's *Modest Proposal*, are rendered the more spine chilling by the matter-of-fact tone in which they are uttered. And this is where the paradox comes in. Although the method and most of the assumptions of *The Prince* are so much of a piece with Machiavelli's thought that the book could not have been written by anyone else, yet in certain important respects, including some of the most shocking of the epigrams, *The Prince* contradicts everything else Machiavelli ever wrote and everything we know about his life. And everyone who has studied the subject at all has always known this.

The history of Machiavelli's literary reputation underlines the paradox. His other political works were received on publication much as they have been received ever since, respectfully but without undue excitement. However, when *The Prince* was published in 1532, five years after its author's death, it achieved an enormous *succès de scandale*. As word of its appalling doctrines spread, all Europe hummed with a chorus of disapproval. For two centuries, to call one's political opponent a disciple of Machiavelli was about the worst thing one could say of him. The cynical immorality of the maxims in *The Prince* horrified even so unscrupulous a young rascal as Frederick the Great of Prussia—or at least he said they did.

Then, as the modern spirit of nationalism dawned, the image of Old Nick began to change. Appropriately enough, it was Herder who first declared that *The Prince* was neither a satire nor an iniquitous guide for political criminals, but an objective study of sixteenth-century Italian politics, offered by a patriot as a service to his country. People began to point out that if Machiavelli recommended behavior of which one could not really approve, he did it for the sake of a united Italy. Some of his councils were shocking, truly, but only bitter, dangerous medicines would suffice for his corrupt age. So, from being a sort of Byronic diabolist, Machiavelli gradually became a hero, and then a saint of the Italian Risorgimento. Villari's solid volumes proving that Machiavelli was a Florentine patriot, and perhaps even an Italian one, are the chief monument to this nineteenth-century hero-image.

In the twentieth century the image changed again, partly, perhaps, because of difficulties in the nationalist explanation, but mostly, I suspect, because of a change in the prevailing climate of opinion. Kossuth and Garibaldi were being shouldered aside by Darwin and Pasteur, and from being a patriot whose exaggerations were forgivable because of his devotion to torn and trampled Italy, Machiavelli became the passionless, objective scientist, the perfect mirror and analyst of his time. Machiavelli's "objectivity" and "realism" had been praised in the nineteenth century and even earlier by a few people, mostly by philosophers like Herder and Fichte and Hegel, who did not bother to check up on him; but it was Sir Frederick Pollock who, about 1910, first conferred on Machiavelli the proud title of "scientist." As far as I know he has held it to this day, the dissenters being mainly belated exponents of the nationalist-patriot school. In his *Myth of the State* Ernst Cassirer enshrined the current image in an eloquent passage describing Machiavelli watching political behavior and drawing conclusions from it with the passionless detachment of a chemist in a laboratory.

There is a certain superficial plausibility about this view. Since so much of *The Prince* does harmonize with the rest of Machiavelli's thought, and since it is so quotable, the temptation to explain away the discords is hard to resist. And often Machiavelli did say that he wanted to show things as they really are instead of as they ought to be, and often he did try to do so, not only in his state papers, where dispassionate, objective reporting was expected of him, but also in the *Discorsi* and other works in which the literary tradition was different. He tried; he did not always succeed. To insist that republics are always juster, wiser and more trustworthy than princes, as Machiavelli frequently does in the *Discorsi*, seems a judgment as much



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charged with subjective emotion as its reverse would be. And, in the year 1520, to dismiss firearms as unimportant in war seems slightly unrealistic even for a cloistered scholar, and rather more so for a man who had been more than a decade the secretary of war of an embattled republic. Yet usually he did try to be objective, and that is why *The Prince* is so serious a stumbling block. The notion that this little book was meant as a serious, scientific treatise on government contradicts everything we know about Machiavelli's life, about his writings, and about the history of his time.

In the first place, this proposition asks us to believe that Niccolò Machiavelli deliberately wrote a handbook meant to help a tyrant rule the once free people of Florence. The Machiavelli were an old Florentine family, noted for their devotion to the republic. In the two centuries before Niccolò was born they had given Florence twelve *gonfalonieri* and fifty-four priors. In the fifteenth century, Niccolò's great-granduncle Girolamo won himself a place in the hearts of the people by suffering imprisonment, torture, exile and death in defense of their liberty. Another Machiavelli, Francesco, was remembered for a public speech in which he said, "It is freedom that makes cities and their citizens great. This is well known. Tyranny makes only desolation. For tyrants must always fear good citizens and try to exterminate them." Nearly a century later, Niccolò made this assertion one of the central theses of his *Discorsi*, thus prolonging the family tradition in which he was brought up. We know more about his youth now than we did until a few years ago when the diary of Niccolò's father, Bernardo, was found and published. It is not unlike the diaries of many other of the pious, thrifty, hard-working, rather puritanical Florentine petty bourgeoisie who were the backbone of the city's greatness. Bernardo was almost poor and, in those days of Medici domination, without public honors. But he was proud of his family, a firm but affectionate father, anxious to bring up his son to good Latin letters and a devotion to republican principles. Poor as he was, Bernardo had a small library of classics, including, the diary shows, a Livy, which by the time Niccolò was seventeen had to be rebound. To his wife, Bartolomea de'Nelli, the authoress of a number of hymns, *laudi sacre*, Bernardo probably left their son's religious education, but he himself would have seen to it that Niccolò learned the history of his *patria*, how Florence was the citadel of freedom and the guardian of Italian liberty, and the share his own family once had in this glorious heritage.

In the 1470's it was still possible to believe that this heritage was not lost. The constitution of the city was still republican, and though the Medici enjoyed an influence that republicians like Bernardo might regard as sinister, and though the young Medici did not mask their power with the same care their grandfather had used, they were still in form and law just scions of the leading family of a free commonwealth. In fact, as the popular wrath against the Pazzi conspirators proved, most Florentines, particularly the *popolo minuto*, the "little people," still thought of the Medici as the guardians of their liberties both against foreign domination and against the selfish designs of the oligarchs. It was only slowly, in the 1480's, that most Florentines began to realize the attrition of their freedom. When Niccolò was twenty-five they rebelled, and Piero de Medici rode out of the city gates, never to return. Four years later Niccolò Machiavelli was appointed chancellor of the second chancery, and shortly thereafter secretary to the Ten of War. For the next fourteen years he served the Florentine republic with furious, dedicated zeal. He has left the proof of his devotion in the record of his activities and in the state papers in which he spun endless schemes for the defense and aggrandizement of the republic, and constantly preached the same to his superiors. One characteristic quotation is irresistible. The subject is an increase in the defense budget that Machiavelli's masters were reluctant to vote. He reminds them with mounting impatience that only strong states are respected by their



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neighbors and that their neglect of military strength in the recent past has cost them dear, and he ends with anything but detached calm: "Other people learn from the perils of their neighbors, you will not even learn from your own, nor trust yourselves, nor recognize the time you are losing and have lost. I tell you fortune will not alter the sentence it has pronounced unless you alter your behavior. Heaven will not and cannot preserve those bent on their own ruin. But I cannot believe it will come to this, seeing that you are free Florentines and have your liberty in your own hands. In the end I believe you will have the same regard for your freedom that men always have who are born free and desire to live free."

Only a man who cared deeply for the independence of his city would use language like this to his employers. But Machiavelli gave an even more impressive proof of his disinterested patriotism. After fourteen years in high office, in a place where the opportunities for dipping into the public purse and into the pockets of his compatriots and of those foreigners he did business with were practically unlimited (among other duties he acted as paymaster-general of the army), Machiavelli retired from public life as poor as when he had entered it. Later he was to refer to this record with pride, but also with a kind of rueful astonishment; and, indeed, if this was not a unique feat in his day, it was a very rare one.

For fourteen years Machiavelli served the republic. Then, in 1512, the militia he had counted on so much ran like rabbits at the first sight of the Spanish veterans. There was the bloody sack of Prato, and the republic collapsed before his eyes. The Medici, Cardinal Giovanni and his brother Giuliano, came back behind the Spanish pikes, and while the new government was still unsettled there was a plot to murder them. Two young men named Capponi and Boscoli were arrested. One of them tried to get rid of a paper on which was a short list of names. They were the names of prominent republicans, some of whom had already fled. One was that of Niccolò Machiavelli.

Machiavelli had not fled. Dismissed from office, he still lingered in Florence. He was arrested, imprisoned and interrogated under torture. Four turns of the rack were usually enough to break a man, body and spirit. Niccolò endured six, and well enough to congratulate himself afterward not just on his survival but on his courage. He admitted nothing, and since nothing could be proved against him, he was released with no further punishment than the loss of his offices, a ruinous fine, and exile to his tiny estate seven miles from the gates of Florence, there to eat his heart out in loneliness and boredom.

Machiavelli emerged from prison in mid-March, 1513. Most people believe that *The Prince* was finished by December. I suppose it is possible to imagine that a man who has seen his country enslaved, his life's work wrecked and his own career with it, and has, for good measure, been tortured within an inch of his life should thereupon go home and write a book intended to teach his enemies the proper way to maintain themselves, writing all the time, remember, with the passionless objectivity of a scientist in a laboratory. It must be possible to imagine such behavior, because Machiavelli scholars do imagine it and accept it without a visible tremor. But it is a little difficult for the ordinary mind to compass.

The difficulty is increased by the fact that this acceptance of tyranny seems to have been a passing phase. Throughout the rest of his life Machiavelli wrote as a republican and moved mainly in republican circles. In 1524 two of his closest friends and patrons, Zanobi Buondelmonti and the poet Luigi Alamanni, were involved in another conspiracy against the Medici and fled. Much later Machiavelli's name was connected with this conspiracy too. The accusation came too late to do him any harm, and nothing was proved. Of course it does not prove anything either that when the Medici were finally driven out again in 1527, Buondelmonti and Alamanni began



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working at once to bring their old friend back to the service of the restored republic. But the facts do seem to indicate a singularly consistent life, except for one aberration.

The notion that *The Prince* is what it pretends to be, a scientific manual for tyrants, has to contend not only against Machiavelli's life but against his writings, as, of course, everyone who wants to use *The Prince* as a centerpiece in an exposition of Machiavelli's political thought has recognized. Ever since Herder, the standard explanation has been that in the corrupt conditions of sixteenth-century Italy only a prince could create a strong state capable of expansion. The trouble with this is that it was chiefly because they widened their boundaries that Machiavelli preferred republics. In the *Discorsi* he wrote, "We know by experience that states have never signally increased either in territory or in riches except under a free government. The cause is not far to seek, since it is the well-being not of individuals but of the community which makes the state great, and without question this universal well-being is nowhere secured save in a republic. . . . Popular rule is always better than the rule of princes." This is not just a casual remark. It is the main theme of the *Discorsi* and the basic assumption of all but one of Machiavelli's writings, as it was the basic assumption of his political career.

There is another way in which *The Prince* is a puzzling anomaly. In practically everything else Machiavelli wrote, he displayed the sensitivity and tact of the developed literary temperament. He was delicately aware of the tastes and probable reactions of his public. No one could have written that magnificent satiric soliloquy of Fra Timotheo in *Mandragola,* for instance, who had not an instinctive feeling for the response of an audience. But the effect of the publication of *The Prince* on the first several generations of its readers in Italy (outside of Florence) and in the rest of Europe was shock. It horrified, repelled and fascinated like a Medusa's head. A large part of the shock was caused, of course, by the cynical immorality of some of the proposals, but instead of appeasing revulsion and insinuating his new proposals as delicately as possible, Machiavelli seems to delight in intensifying the shock and deliberately employing devices to heighten it. Of these not the least effective is the way *The Prince* imitates, almost parodies, one of the best known and most respected literary forms of the three preceding centuries, the handbook of advice to princes. This literary type was enormously popular. Its exemplars ran into the hundreds of titles of which a few, like St. Thomas' *De Regno* and Erasmus' *Institutio principis christiani* are not quite unknown today. In some ways, Machiavelli's little treatise was just like all the other "Mirrors of Princes"; in other ways it was a diabolical burlesque of all of them, like a political Black Mass.

The shock was intensified again because Machiavelli deliberately addressed himself primarily to princes who have newly acquired their principalities and do not owe them either to inheritance or to the free choice of their countrymen. The short and ugly word for this kind of prince is "tyrant." Machiavelli never quite uses the word except in illustrations from classical antiquity, but he seems to delight in dancing all around it until even the dullest of his readers could not mistake his meaning. Opinions about the relative merits of republics and monarchies varied during the Renaissance, depending mainly upon where one lived, but about tyrants there was only one opinion. Cristoforo Landino, Lorenzo the Magnificent's teacher and client, stated the usual view in his commentary on Dante, written when Niccolò Machiavelli was a child. When he came to comment on Brutus and Cassius in the lowest circle of hell, Landino wrote: "Surely it was extraordinary cruelty to inflict such severe punishment on those who faced death to deliver their country from slavery, a deed for which, if they had been Christians, they would have merited the most honored seats in the highest heaven. If we consult the laws of any well-constituted republic, we shall find them to decree no greater reward to anyone than to the man who kills the



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tyrant." So said the Italian Renaissance with almost unanimous voice. If Machiavelli's friends were meant to read the manuscript of *The Prince* and if they took it at face value—an objective study of how to be a successful tyrant offered as advice to a member of the species—they can hardly have failed to be deeply shocked. And if the manuscript was meant for the eye of young Giuliano de Medici alone, he can hardly have been pleased to find it blandly assumed that he was one of a class of whom his father's tutor had written that the highest duty of a good citizen was to kill them.

The literary fame of *The Prince* is due, precisely, to its shocking quality, so if the book was seriously meant as a scientific manual, it owes its literary reputation to an artistic blunder. And if it was meant for a Medici prince, it has at its core an even more inexplicable piece of tactlessness. For to the Medici prince, "to a new prince established by fortune and the arms of others," Machiavelli offers Cesare Borgia as a model. There was just enough truth to the suggestion that Giuliano de Medici owed his principate "to the arms of others" —after all, it was the Spanish troops who overthrew the republic as it was French troops who established Cesare in the Romagna—to be wounding. There was just enough cogency in the comparison between the duke of Valentinois, a pope's son, and the duke of Nemours, a pope's brother, to make it stick. These things merely heightened the affront. A Medici, of a family as old and as illustrious as any in Florence, a man whose great-grandfather, grandfather and father had each in turn been acknowledged the first citizen of the republic and who now aspired to no more than to carry on their tradition (or so he said) was being advised to emulate a foreigner, a Spaniard, a bastard, convicted, in the court of public opinion anyway, of fratricide, incest and a long role of abominable crimes, a man specially hated in Tuscany for treachery and extortion and for the gross misconduct of his troops on neutral Florentine soil, and a man, to boot, who as a prince had been a notorious and spectacular failure.

This almost forgotten fact lies at the heart of the mystery of *The Prince*. We remember what Machiavelli wrote about Cesare in his most famous work, and we forget what Cesare was. But in 1513 most Italians would not have forgotten the events of 1503, and unless we assume that Machiavelli himself had forgotten what he himself had reported ten or eleven years before, we can scarcely believe that his commendation of the Borgia was seriously meant. If we take *The Prince* as an objective, scientific description of political reality, we must face contradiction not only by what we know of Machiavelli's political career, of his usual opinions and of his literary skill, but also by the facts of history as reported by, among others, Machiavelli himself.

Let us take just a few instances, the crucial ones. Relying on assertions in Chapter Seven of *The Prince*, most historians in the past hundred years have written as if the Borgia had restored peace and order in the Romagna, unified its government and won the allegiance of its inhabitants. Part of the time this must have been going on, Machiavelli was an envoy in the duke's camp. Although he does warn the signory repeatedly that Valentino is a formidable ruffian, daring, unscrupulous and of unlimited ambition, he never mentions these statesmanlike achievements—nor do any of the other reports from observers in the area, Spanish, French, Venetian, Sienese; nor do any other contemporary sources. All the indications are quite contrary. The most probing recent study of Valentino's career, Gabriele Pepe's *La Politica dei Borgia*, sums the matter up by saying that the duke did nothing to end factional strife and anarchy in the Romagna; he merely superimposed the brutal rule of his Spanish captains on top of it.

We can make a concrete check on a related instance. After saying in Chapter Thirteen that the duke had used first French troops, then mercenaries under *condottieri* captains and then his own men, Machiavelli comments, "He was never esteemed more highly than when everyone saw that he was complete master of his own



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forces." But in the *Legazione*, Machiavelli never once refers to the military capacity of the duke or praises the courage or discipline of his army. Instead, as late as December 14, 1502, he writes from Imola of the troops under Cesare's own command: "They have devoured everything here except the stones . . . here in the Romagna they are behaving just as they did in Tuscany last year [of their passage then, Landucci had noted in his diary that none of the foreign armies that had crossed Tuscany in the past seven years had behaved so abominably as these Italians under the papal banner] and they show no more discipline and no less confusion than they did then." There is no subsequent indication that Machiavelli ever changed his mind.

Nowhere is *The Prince* more at odds with the facts of history or with Machiavelli's own previous judgments than in the famous concluding passage of Chapter Seven on which any favorable opinion of Cesare's statecraft must be based. The passage in *The Prince* reads: "On the day Pope Julius II was elected, the Duke told me that he had thought of everything that might happen on the death of his father and provided for everything except that when his father died he himself would be at death's door. . . . only the shortness of the life of Alexander and his own sickness frustrated his designs. Therefore he who wants to make sure of a new principality . . . cannot find a better model than the actions of this man." Could Machiavelli have believed this in 1513? He certainly did not believe it in 1503. He did not even record then that Cesare ever said anything of the sort; and though it would not be unlike some of the duke's whimperings, he could not have said it on the day of Julius II's election, when he was boasting to everyone that the new pope would obey him. In any case, Machiavelli would have believed what, in *The Prince*, he said the duke said, as little as he believed the bluster that, in 1503, he actually reported. By November of 1503, nobody could have believed it. In fact, even in August, when Alexander VI died, at the age of seventy-two after a papacy of eleven years (not such a short life and not such a short reign), most people in Rome, including all of the ambassadors whose reports survive and most of the cardinals with whom they had talked, felt sure Cesare was finished. He had always ridden on his father's shoulders, and he was hated, feared and despised even by most of the faction who had stood by the old pope. No one trusted him, and there was no one he could trust. No pope would dare support him, and without papal support his principate was built on quicksand. He had never, in fact, faced this eventual predicament, and he did not face it when it arose. It is true that he was ill in August with a bout of malaria, but not too ill to stall the election and then maneuver the choice of the old and ailing Pius III, thus delaying an unavoidable doom. Julius II was not elected until November. In all those months and even after the election, Italy was treated through the eyes of its ambassadors to the spectacle of the terrible Borgia duke writhing in an agony of indecision, now about to go to Genoa to raise money, now ready to start for an interview with the king of France, now on the point of leading his troops back to the Romagna, but in fact hovering about the curia, plucking the sleeves of cardinals and bowing and smiling to envoys he used to bully, sometimes swaggering through the streets with the powerful armed guard he felt he needed to protect him from the vengeance of the Orsini, sometimes shaking beneath bedclothes with what might have been fever and might have been funk. We catch a glimpse of him at midnight in the chamber of Guidobaldo de Montrefeltre, the duke of Urbino, who had been newly restored to his former estates by the loyalty of his subjects, and to his former rank of *gonfaloniere* of the Church by the new pope. There Cesare kneels on the floor, sobbing in pure terror, begging the old friend whom he had betrayed and robbed, with incredible meanness, not just of his duchy, but of his books and his antique medals, not to kill him, please not to kill him, to leave him at least his life, until Guidobaldo, beyond any feeling about this



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curious monster, says he does not wish to kill him; he only wishes him to go away.

Shortly thereafter Cesare slinks off to Naples and imprisonment, followed by the scornful laughter of Italy. For nothing is more absurd than the great straw-stuffed giants of carnival, and when such a giant has for a season frightened all Italy, the laughter is that much the louder. Machiavelli was one of the ambassadors in Rome. He knew all this as well as anyone. One can read in his dispatches his growing impatience with the duke, his growing contempt for Cesare's wild talk, aimless shifts of plan, alternate blustering and whining. "The duke, who never kept faith with anyone," he wrote, "is now obliged to rely on the faith of others." And later, "The duke, who never showed mercy, now finds mercy his only hope." Later in his historical poem, *Decennali*, Machiavelli made his distaste for the Borgia clear enough. Did he really mean to propose him in 1513 as a model prince? Was he writing as a friend of tyrants or as a dispassionate scientific observer when he said he did?

There is, of course, an alternative view, never predominant and now hopelessly old-fashioned, but one that was once held by some quite respectable people. The earliest explicit statement of it I know comes from Alberico Gentili, an Italian who lectured on the civil law at Oxford in the reign of Elizabeth I. Speaking of his fellow countryman, Gentili wrote, in part: "He has been much calumniated and deserves our sympathy. He was, indeed, a praiser of democracy (*Democratiae laudator*) and its most zealous champion. Born, educated and honored with office in a republic, he was a supreme foe of tyrants. It was his purpose not to instruct tyrants but to reveal their secret machinations, stripping them bare before their suffering people. . . . he aimed to instruct [those] people under the pretext of instructing the prince, hoping that thus his teaching might be tolerated." Toward the end of the seventeenth century, Baruch Spinoza, without, I think, ever having read Gentili, expressed a similar opinion, and nearly a hundred years later Jean Jacques Rousseau concurred. In the course of those centuries before violent nationalism had blurred men's vision, enough writers must have identified *The Prince* as a satire so that Herder felt compelled to begin his defense by indignantly repudiating this view.

Perhaps nobody should be rash enough today to call *The Prince* a satire, not in the teeth of all the learned opinion to the contrary. But when one comes to think of it, what excellent sense the idea makes! However you define "satire"—and I understand that critics are still without a thoroughly satisfactory definition—it must include the intention to denounce, expose or deride someone or something, and it is to be distinguished from mere didactic condemnation and invective (when it can be distinguished at all) by the employment of such devices as irony, sarcasm and ridicule. It need not be provocative of laughter; I doubt whether many people ever laughed or even smiled at the adventures of Gulliver among the Yahoos. And though satire admits of, and in fact always employs, exaggeration and overemphasis, the author, to be effective, must not appear to be, and in fact need not be, conscious that this is so. When Dryden wrote, "The rest to some faint meaning make pretense / But Shadwell never deviates into sense," he may have been conscious of some overstatement, but he was conveying his considered criticism of Shadwell's poetry. And when Pope called "Lord Fanny" "this painted child of dirt that stinks and stings," the language may be violent, but who can doubt that this is how Pope felt? Indeed the satirist seems to put forth his greatest powers chiefly when goaded by anger, hatred and savage indignation. If Machiavelli wrote *The Prince* out of the fullness of these emotions rather than out of the dispassionate curiosity of the scientist or out of a base willingness to toady to the destroyers of his country's liberty, then one can understand why the sentences crack like a whip, why the words bite and burn like acid, and why the whole style has a density and impact unique among his writings.

To read *The Prince* as satire not only clears up puzzles and resolves contradic-



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tions; it gives a new dimension and meaning to passages unremarkable before. Take the place in the dedication that runs "just as those who paint landscapes must seat themselves below in the plains to see the mountains, and high in the mountains to see the plains, so to understand the nature of the people one must be a prince, and to understand the nature of a prince, one must be one of the people." In the usual view, this is a mere rhetorical flourish, but the irony, once sought, is easy to discover, for Machiavelli, in fact, takes both positions. The people can only see the prince as, by nature and necessity, false, cruel, mean and hypocritical. The prince, from his lofty but precarious perch, dare not see the people as other than they are described in Chapter Seventeen: "ungrateful, fickle, treacherous, cowardly and greedy. As long as you succeed they are yours entirely. They will offer you their blood, property, lives and children when you do not need them. When you do need them, they will turn against you." Probably Machiavelli really believed that this, or something like it, happened to the human nature of a tyrant and his subjects. But the view, like its expression, is something less than objective and dispassionate, and the only lesson it has for princes would seem to be: "Run for your life!"

Considering the brevity of the book, the number of times its princely reader is reminded, as in the passage just quoted, that his people will overthrow him at last is quite remarkable. Cities ruled in the past by princes easily accustom themselves to a change of masters, Machiavelli says in Chapter Five, but "in republics there is more vitality, greater hatred and more desire for vengeance. They cannot forget their lost liberty, so that the safest way is to destroy them—or to live there." He does not say what makes that safe. And most notably, with savage irony, "the duke [Borgia] was so able and laid such firm foundations . . . that the Romagna [after Alexander VI's death] waited for him more than a month." This is as much as to put Leo X's brother on notice that without papal support he can expect short shrift. If the Romagna, accustomed to tyranny, waited only a month before it rose in revolt, how long will Florence wait? Tactlessness like this is unintelligible unless it is deliberate, unless these are not pedantic blunders but sarcastic ironies, taunts flung at the Medici, incitements to the Florentines.

Only in a satire can one understand the choice of Cesare Borgia as the model prince. The common people of Tuscany could not have had what they could expect of a prince's rule made clearer than by the example of this bloodstained buffoon whose vices, crimes and follies had been the scandal of Italy, and the conduct of whose brutal, undisciplined troops had so infuriated the Tuscans that when another band of them crossed their frontier, the peasants fell upon them and tore them to pieces. The Florentine aristocrats on whom Giovanni and cousin Giulio were relying to bridge the transition to despotism would have shared the people's revulsion to Cesare, and they may have been rendered somewhat more thoughtful by the logic of the assumption that nobles were more dangerous to a tyrant than commoners and should be dealt with as Cesare had dealt with the petty lords of the Romagna. Moreover, they could scarcely have avoided noticing the advice to use some faithful servant to terrorize the rest, and then to sacrifice him to escape the obloquy of his conduct, as Cesare had sacrificed Captain Ramiro. As for the gentle, mild-mannered, indolent Giuliano de Medici himself, he was the last man to be attracted by the notion of imitating the Borgia. He wanted no more than to occupy the same social position in Florence that his magnificent father had held, and not even that if it was too much trouble. Besides, in the days of the family's misfortunes, Giuliano had found shelter and hospitality at the court of Guidobaldo de Montrefeltre. Giuliano lived at Urbino for many years (there is a rather charming picture of him there in Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano*), and all his life he cherished deep gratitude and a strong affection for Duke Guidobaldo. He must have felt, then, a special loathing for the



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foreign ruffian who had betrayed and plundered his patron, and Machiavelli must have known that he did. Only a wish to draw the most odious comparison possible, only a compulsion to wound and insult, could have led Machiavelli to select the Borgia as the prime exemplar in his "Mirror of Princes."

There is one last famous passage that reads differently if we accept *The Prince* as satire. On any other hypothesis, the final exhortation to free Italy from the barbarians sounds at best like empty rhetoric, at worst like calculating but stupid flattery. Who could really believe that the lazy, insipid Giuliano or his petty, vicious successor were the liberators Italy awaited? But if we have heard the mordant irony and sarcasm of the preceding chapters and detected the overtones of hatred and despair, then this last chapter will be charged with an irony turned inward, the bitter mockery of misdirected optimism. For before the Florentine republic had been gored to death by Spanish pikes, Machiavelli had believed, as he was to believe again, that a free Florentine republic could play the liberator's role. Perhaps, since he was all his life a passionate idealist, blind to reality when his desires were strong, Machiavelli may not have given up that wild hope even when he wrote *The Prince*. If he had not, then the verses at the end take on a new meaning, clearer perhaps to his contemporaries than they can be to us.

> Virtù contro a furore
> Prenderà l'arme, e fia il combatter corto;
> Chè l'antico valore
> Nell'italici cor non è ancor morto.

The antique valor Petrarch appealed to was, after all, that of republican Rome. Perhaps that first sharp combat was not to be against the barbarians.

However that may be, we must agree that if *The Prince* was meant as a satire, as a taunt and challenge to the Medici and a tocsin to the people of Florence, then it must have been recognized as such by the Florentine literati and by the Medici themselves. If so we have the solution to two minor puzzles connected with this puzzling book. A rasher ruling family than the Medici might have answered the challenge by another round of torture and imprisonment or by a quiet six inches of steel under the fifth rib. But brother Giovanni and brother Giovanni's familiar spirit, cousin Giulio, though in fact they were aiming at exactly the kind of despotism that Machiavelli predicted, hoped to achieve it with a minimum of trouble by preserving for the time being the forms of the republic. It would not do, by punishing the author, to admit the pertinence of his satire. So the Medici did nothing. But they were not a stupid family, and they cannot have been very pleased. This would explain some puzzling things: why, for example, the ardent republicans among Machiavelli's friends, like Zanobi Buondelmonti, were not alienated by *The Prince*, and why the former republicans in Medici service among his correspondents, like Vettori, for instance, refer to it so seldom and with such muffled embarrassment. It would also explain why, among all the manuscripts of *The Prince* dating from Machiavelli's lifetime (and it seems to have had a considerable circulation and to have been multiplied by professional copyists), we have never found the copy which should have had the best chance of preservation—I mean that copy, beautifully lettered on vellum and richly bound, presented with its dedication to the Medici prince. Not only is it absent from the Laurentian library now, there is no trace that it was ever there. There is no evidence that it ever existed. Probably Machiavelli figured that the joke was not worth the extra expense.



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# *If You Don't Mind My Saying So . . . . . .*

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

When I was young, the youths of my generation were divided into two classes, the more frivolous being described as "flaming," the more serious as "lost." If you merely drank bathtub gin and went to petting parties, you were obviously flaming. If you searched your soul and tried to be "different," you were lost. And there were, of course, certain of the more versatile (like Scott Fitzgerald) who managed to be both.

Had those of us who survive followed the usual pattern, we should now be worrying in our turn about the indiscipline and irresponsibility of our juniors. But if I may judge from what I read in the more serious magazines, this is one of those eras, unusual in history, when youth strikes its elders as too tame instead of too wild. It is accused of wanting security rather than achievement or even adventure, of aspiring no higher than the status of a good organization man, and of being all too willing to conform in the most minute detail, obediently abandoning rugs for wall-to-wall carpeting at just the right moment, and moving from ranch house to "split level" as the winds blow. One critic, in a phrase which has been widely quoted with varying degrees of approval or disapproval, went so far as to recommend a plunge in the Plaza fountain at three o'clock in the morning. And while many complained that this seemed a gesture of noncomformity more appropriate to fifteen than to twenty-five, they still seemed to know what the critic meant. Survivors from the Regency must have felt much the same about the early Victorians. But the situation has never been usual.

To this discussion I have one contribution to make. So far as I know, there has not been any analysis of early marriage and of large early families as a symptom, or perhaps a cause, of conformity. Both the young men and the young women of my generation were supposed so consistently to prefer freedom to responsibility and "sex experience" to procreation that the bugaboo called "race suicide," invented a generation earlier, was regularly paraded. Nobody has any occasion to worry about that now. Planned parenthood has turned out to mean just that and not, as the moralists once feared, planned sterility. And the plan is usually put into operation just as soon as the certificate is signed. Is this playing safe or is it being reckless?

One's first impulse is to say that it is being reckless. To marry while still in college, to set up housekeeping on the installment plan, and to beget children one is not ready to support does not look like overcaution. Yet there is another way of looking at it. When John Tanner is proving that no normal man or women actually wants to get married even when the Life Force has him in its merciless grip, he ends his list of matrimony's penalties by adding the necessity for abandoning "the romantic possibilities of an unknown future." Has this become not a penalty but a boon to a conformist generation anxious above all else to know what is going to happen to it? Are the romantic possibilities of an unknown future the last thing it wants? Does it prefer to settle as soon as possible into a pattern of life more or less fixed once and for all? Does it want immediately the responsibilities of a family as a steadying influence? Is it afraid of that "freedom" which its elders were once accused of rating too high? Whether early marriage is or is not an important symptom of the trend to conformity, it is certainly a condition that promotes it. Hostages to fortune do not encourage the taking of chances. They increase, and they also furnish an excuse for the desire to be secure. And that may be



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one of the greatest appeals of these hostages.

Those years (when there are any) that lie between the advent of maturity and the responsibility of a family are the freest most men and women ever know—in significant as well as in trivial ways. As children they were under the control of their parents. As heads of a family they will be largely dominated by the needs of that family. No one else is so free to venture as the unmarried adult. No one else pays so light a penalty for any sort of nonconformity or is likely to feel so free to risk a play for some big prize. He can, if necessary, "go up to the garret." There is neither anyone to forbid nor to be dragged along with him into poverty. The world is his oyster, and he can risk trying to open it. He can march to his own drum, and he is freer than he ever was before, or ever will be again, to set his own values. But there are fewer young people in that position than there were a generation ago. The epoch which used to lie between adolescence and family life has been all but abolished. Whether with deliberate intention or not, it is now the usual thing for young men and young women to deprive themselves of it. They pass almost without interval from tutelage to domesticity. Is it any wonder if they are most unusually conformist?

The term "wild oats" is commonly used with very limited implications. Even in that limited sense the sowing of a few was widely recommended during most of the eighteenth century, and in the twenties the practice was—with characteristic solemnity and a careful avoidance of the raffish term—again defended as the last prescribed course in that curriculum of "sex education" that should precede the final "adjustment to matrimony." Wild oats in this sense are again generally frowned upon, and we need not reopen the debate. But there are various species of wild oats other than the sexual. At least there ought to be some general term which would cover the whole exuberant process in the course of which youth questions and criticizes and rebels before it "settles down"—some word to name the epoch of adventure and risk, of free experiment with attitudes and aims, with projects and standards of value. When no wild oats have been sown, no unconventional crops can be reaped. And I do not see how anything other than conformity can be expected of a generation which willingly foregoes the opportunity to sow even a few.

One of the things I have learned while conducting this department is that there is no use trying to be up to date in a quarterly. Today the winds of doctrine are veering and gusty. Writing as I usually do, four or five months before the piece actually appears, I often find that the winds have obviously changed direction during the interval and that what I thought a neglected topic or point of view has been, in the meantime, broached, mulled over, run through the mill, and so "bolted to the bran" that I must sound old hat by the time I get my word in. A year ago, for instance, the "educators" seemed to have it all their own way. "Life adjustment," "age levels," "acceptable English" and "norms of achievement" were criticized by so small a minority that I planned to say something on the subject myself. But I put it off for another quarter, only to discover that by now *Life* and *Time* have gone into action and that educators are so panicky that they have suggested banning the Luce publications from school libraries. Whether these unpredictable shifts mean that the public mind is admirably "open" or only, as some cynic once said, "drafty." I am not sure. But there the fact is.

Take another instance—which happens to be the one I really have in mind and which brought the matter up. I don't think it can be more than six months ago that I first came across "Togetherness" and recognized immediately by a little wave of nausea that this was one of those terms invented by a publicity genius to popularize something (a home magazine, I think) but destined, both as a word and as a concept, to sweep the country and to bemuse still further those who had begun to feel that split-level houses with wall-to-wall carpeting should be given a spiritual *raison d'être*. Even by now (May, 1958) Together-



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ness has been so widely commented upon, unfavorably as well as favorably, that the *Nation* has had a paragraph about how many paragraphs were being written on the subject. Goodness only knows how tired everyone may be of it by the time the Autumn SCHOLAR comes out. Nevertheless, I am determined to get my negative vote recorded, however belatedly. Whoever may have mothered the term and whatever sly commercial purpose he or she may have been trying to serve, it was conceived of the spirit of the age, and what it means is an encouragement of that fanatical domesticity so often characteristic of those who have never been anything except children first and parents immediately afterward.

I am not advocating a return to the mores of eighteenth-century England, where upper-class parents had little to do with one another and nothing at all to do with the children whom they shipped off at a tender age to one of those public schools where anarchy tempered by a dictatorship of the biggest bully was supposed to teach them self-reliance. But adults as well as children have needs; these needs are not identical; and there isn't much use trying to bring children up to a healthy maturity if they are never going to have an opportunity to exercise it. And you cannot, in my opinion, get much good out of maturity unless you can spend a reasonable proportion of your time (a) in solitude and (b) in the company of equals whose interests are similar to your own. Even Longfellow celebrated "the children's hour." He did not assume that they had a right to the whole twenty-four.

If they do have to be in on everything, then everything has to be conducted on a childish level. To a certain extent you can share a child's interest. But he cannot share yours—that is, if you have any above the childish level. And so far as I can make out, Togetherness means precisely not having any such interests. The father who spends any considerable part of his leisure in reading, contemplation, or even in the pursuit of the more active adult interests is likely to be regarded as just as bad as the old-fashioned slacker who spent his evenings playing poker with the boys. Togetherness seems to be, in other words, the latest expression of that obsession with the common denominator that leads to the assumption that any upward deviation from the average is as antisocial as a failure to live up to it. Europeans sometimes say that Americans never grow up. Perhaps the reason is that their children won't let them.

Thoreau once wrote that he would like to make his Journal "the journal of my loves." He didn't succeed too well, and some of his most vivid passages are full of venom—like that hymn of hate against three visiting "reformers" or the passage about the gold rushers, which ends: "The hog that roots his own living and so makes manure would be ashamed of such company."

Sometimes I think that I am like Thoreau in this particular unsuccess. I believe that there are a number of things right about the world I live in—even, as I somewhat grudgingly admit, about the human part of it. And I am always planning to give civilization in the United States and my fellow man a little pat on the back. But for some reason I usually reach the end of my space before getting around to it. And that is going to happen again this quarter because I can't resist mentioning another thing wrong with us.

Having disapproved of early marriage and sneered at Togetherness, I wish now to protest against so much talk about the importance of "recreation." It isn't true—not any longer at least—that Americans believe only in work, money-making and getting ahead. We and our children spend a lot of time amusing ourselves—or trying to. But we recognize only two categories of human activity: the utilitarian and the recreational. The only two questions which get asked are "What is it good for?" and "Is it fun?" We assume that the serious part of living consists in accomplishing useful things, including, as I must admit, "doing good." We assume also that the leisure of which we promise ourselves more and more should be devoted to salutary recreation. I have nothing against either work or recreation



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in moderation, but it seems to me that a very large part of what is admirable and rewarding in civilized life cannot really be put into either category. Neither the creation nor the enjoyment of the arts is exclusively either useful work or recreation within the current meaning of the latter. Disinterested study and thought, contemplation or, in general, the cultivation of intellect and taste aren't either. Even love can be something more than either procreation on the one hand or a "refreshing sex experience" on the other. Speaking for myself, it seems to me that of all the hours which have been granted me, those I value most in retrospect have been spent neither in "useful activity" nor "recreation." Animals engage in the struggle for existence, and some of them sometimes play. But that is about all. Almost the whole realm of characteristically human activity cannot be classified as either.

The up-and-coming, public spirited and socially responsible American community is always talking about the need for more "recreational facilities," and even juvenile delinquency is commonly blamed partly on "inadequate provision for recreation." But how much is done to encourage leisure activities that are more than time-killing fun? Wouldn't it be well to think a little about the third category. All work and recreation makes Jack a very tiresome barbarian—which seems to be what a good many educators have in mind.

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*Announcing*

*The American Scholar Poetry Contest* *

* *see page 539*



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# ..... *The Revolving Bookstand* .....

## Suspense Suspended

JACQUES BARZUN

In every art there are lesser genres that thrive and give pleasure by using the achievements of the parent form and blending with these something that the greater, with its grand style and scope, cannot or will not accommodate. Thus illustration is part parasite on painting, dinner music on symphonic, and detective fiction on the novel.

What detection adds to the realistic novel is, as its name indicates, the interest in detecting, that is, retracing the steps and motives of a crime, preferably murder. This retracing, which its inventor Poe called ratiocination, is an intellectual stunt that gives pleasure to highbrows; but in order to become art and feed the appetite for a story, it must adapt the conventions of current fiction. Poe adapted his own creation, the short story, and let character drawing go. Conan Doyle borrowed character from Dickens and plot from the melodramatic novel of his age. Dorothy Sayers made use of what might be called the novel of information, heavily peopled with intellectuals and appropriately talkative, of which H. G. Wells produced many models. And so on.

It is clear that a writer of detective stories is too busy weaving his web of crime *twice over*—first forward, as it will appear when disclosed, and then backward, to permit gradual disclosure—to spend genius and time creating a new style and conception of the novel itself. If he did, it would only distract the reader, whose aesthetics for the moment are those of the connoisseur of detection and not of the critic of literature. If one is going to take in and enjoy the new form of Joyce, the new language of Proust, the new substance of Kafka, one has no mind to query the physical coherence and rational likelihood of the events represented. The errors and improbabilities in the great novels from *Don Quixote* to *Lady Chatterly* do not matter. But in good detective fiction perfect form consists in the flawless management of apparent trivia. And these are made convincing by appearing in a world that we accept *because* it is conventional—just the reverse of high art in the free novel.

This being so, it is clear why the detective genre has fallen on evil days. It has lost its character because the contemporary fiction on which it rests is not adaptable to its needs. For one thing, the novel has become blasé about the norm and concentrates on the whacky (a technical term). For another, the modern novel starts from the conviction that society and all who dwell in it are disagreeable and worthless. The second reason, implying a self-contradiction, is even more damaging to detection than the first, for why complain about the badness of life if everyone is detestable? Or, in detection, why pursue the criminal if the victim and society are not worth protecting? It is obvious, moreover, that when everyone is a little mad all calculations of behavior are impossible, and indeed uninteresting. One must then shift gears and enjoy the spectacle as farce or as clinical material.

A reading of the assorted "mysteries" published during the last few months bears out these unhappy conclusions. The output, under various names of which "novel of suspense" is the most frequent, is large.

JACQUES BARZUN, Provost of Columbia University and a member of the Editorial Board of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, is the author of *The Energies of Art* and *The Modern Researcher*.



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The authors are gifted and the publishers' claims exuberant; but the peculiar merit of the genre is in abeyance, and what is given us instead is not so entrancing as to make us forget the substitution.

It is, of course, unfair to generalize about fifty authors, or even two, and I shall try to single out below the exceptions to my pervasive disappointment. But I am bound to confess I do not share the belief that in becoming stories of suspense the former detective tales have "matured" and earned a place in literature. It is said that they are better written. This depends on what you mean by "better": fewer ready-made phrases, perhaps, and a greater artiness in description, not always easy on the nerves, yes; but also a great increase in illiteracy—malapropisms and impossible words and idioms. The prevailing impression is of writing by a gifted child with a poor education.

For instance (I am quoting "good" authors): "A man, supporting a woman whom he says is ill." "She played everything from ear." "For some reason we reacted toward each other like a pair of catalytic agents." ". . . and at each exit left the stage precipitously." ". . . whose memory and powers of observance are better than most." "It was of brand and color Amanda Towne had used." "A liner suffering the administrations of a tug." "The touch of acidity in the notice had infected him deeply." "You know the law of Occam's razor?" "You might say he knew him carnally." The meaning of this last remains obscure, and is certainly not what it says. And these are the same writers who go in for effects borrowed from Faulkner and Virginia Woolf.

What is worse, their idea of suspense is often so thin-spun that it cannot hold the willing reader, e.g. myself. For example, in *Heat Wave* by Caesar Smith (Ballantine, $2.95), a man fresh from the murder of his wife has, before doing away with himself, a brief love affair with a girl met by chance. The tale is supposed to be a "sensitive" treatment of the pair's respectively painful and puzzled feelings; but what it has to do with detection and wherein the suspense consists is not clear. What is clear is that this sort of "problem" is popular among writers who would need a genius they do not claim in order to give weight to their explorations of the soul. And when I say genius, I mean that I should be content with Stevenson's when he wrote "Markheim."

In other contemporary work, the suspense is created at small expense by (a) confusion and (b) irrelevance. The writers take a character supposedly sympathetic and say of him: "Ben was struggling painfully for comprehension"; or again, in another book: "But he had stopped understanding things over an hour ago." The idea is that the reader, also bewildered, will feel breathlessly eager to recover his wits and will call the anxiety suspense. Mind is explicitly excluded. Needless comments and descriptions tend to the same result, that of defying reason, from which one could perhaps call this new genre "novels of haze and daze."

Thus Mr. John Dickson Carr, whose *Death Watch* is reprinted in paper (Berkeley, $.35), clutters up his ingenious devices with a plethora of interjections and side glances at bric-à-brac in a, to me, vain effort to create atmosphere and mystery. In still others, such as Bert and Dolores Hitchens' *End of the Line* (Crime Club, $2.95), this "suspense," which is merely *delay*, is achieved by some obsessional act and its interruptive effect—in this case the detective's alcoholism, which his friends deplore and speculate about at length.

This principle of distraction, which Mr. Carr was the first to use, is by now the stock-in-trade of workers in suspense. Maddeningly chopped up conversations, mechanical shuttling every few pages to another set of characters, absurd concealment of information—are what anybody but a reviewer pays his good money for. And the reviewer, who absorbs more of it, risks what Dr. Johnson said would happen to a man who read *Clarissa* for the plot: he would hang himself. Hanging the reader instead of the criminal seems an unwarranted liberty even if the ostensible goal is suspense.

Among the plots, such as they are, one makes out a few types, seldom varied; but



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the handling still makes the difference between the feeling that one is reading a story and the feeling that the Annual Report of the State Water Commission has got into the wrong covers. When this illusion occurs it is because the author has adopted the style current among the distinguished writers of nonfiction novels. The parallel type in our genre is generally the story of police routine. Mr. John Creasey (also J. J. Marric) is the largest producer in this kind. His *Gideon's Night* (Pyramid, $.35) strikes me as better than his earlier *Gideon's Day*, and also than *Death of a Postman* (Harper, $2.95). A significant thing about these and other tales of routine is the place that married life occupies in them. Not only does the tension between wife and job supply a theme to hang on to, but the domestic round, from child rearing to the exercise of conjugal rights, becomes as prominent as the endless visits and phone calls in the course of duty.

Unmistakably, the detective story, improperly so-called, reflects our hashed-up thoughts, our neuroses about our profession, our sociological self-consciousness about our family, giving by this offprint a moderate nagging kind of pleasure for organization men. Claiming unlimited scope, like the parent genre, the new detection gives up its specialty and with it its *raison d'être*.

Yet it hangs on to the old trappings. We still have the gang stopped by a single man, usually a "private eye"; the door-to-door hunt for the pieces of an unsavory situation, often the crusty old family that acts horrid to its lovable girl (or boy) for nothing worse than drug addiction, promiscuity and forging checks—pure snobbery! There is also the persecution and chase, incomprehensible to the victim who has no visible connection with the doers: Frances and Richard Lockridge's *Catch as Catch Can* (Lippincott, $2.95) is a short and attractive tale of this sort, spoiled only at the end by too prolonged a misunderstanding as to who is chasing whom.

Of true crime treated in fiction form, *The Gallows Garden* by M. E. Chaber (Rinehart, $2.95) is a fair sample. It parallels the Galindez case, taking it to a pleasantly tropical land, and adding the usual flavoring of sex to a series of fairly credible portraits. But of detection there is a minimum: it is adventure out of the old hokum bucket—or should I say Buchan?—and not less readable for that. Mr. Paul Mansfield's *Final Exposure* (Macmillan, $3) is a more original piece of work, which unfortunately is not sustained.

Something of a novelty in the formula that combines the civilian outsider with the regular force was created by the late Henry Kuttner, whose two Murders—*of a Mistress* and *of a Wife*—present the ratiocination of Michael Gray, a San Francisco psychiatrist. *Murder of a Wife* (Permabook, $.35) is far the better of the two. The psychiatry is sober and credible, and the people are well diversified in motive and temperament. The only defect from my point of view is the exclusive insistence on mental fact, for this, however interesting, does not give as good a hold as physical fact to lively speculation and inference.

Finally, thanks to Erle Stanley Gardner and some others, the public is kept supplied with legal plots and trial scenes. Mr. Gardner's own have upheld a quality as remarkable as the pace of their output. Of the two cases of *The Glamorous Ghost* and *The Sun-Bather's Diary* (Pocket Books, $.35 each), the first is the more dramatic and the second the more deftly inventive—though that last word applies uniformly to Mr. Gardner's stories. The inspired vagaries committed during the last twenty years by Mr. Gardner's characters suggest that living in California or on its borders gives one the unshackled versatility of Mr. Gardner himself. It is a people of beautiful liars and custom-tailored schemers, all adept at manipulating large sums. Fortunately, Perry Mason (who is also listed in *Who's Who* as professor of accounting at Berkeley) does in the end account for everything, usually in court, and with a sense of melodramatic staging and repartee that would have pleased Balzac—though Balzac would hardly have understood why Della Street remains a secretary and an old maid.

*(Continued on page 504)*



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*(Continued from page 500)*

No delicate scruples like Mr. Gardner's held back Mr. Robert Traver, a former Michigan judge, when he wrote his huge *Anatomy of a Murder* (St. Martin's Press, $5), a murder arising out of rape. Though well put together, the book is too long; we could do without the tippling lawyer's aide, the sentimental love affair at the end, and perhaps some of the medical evidence. For a short trial story, we must go to Mr. Michael Underwood's *Murder on Trial* (Ives, Washburn, $2.95), which preceded his commendable *Murder Made Absolute* and does not match it in quality, but is yet a sound readable tale: detection slight but genuine.

Besides the foregoing, the year under review brought forth some stories by authors already venerable if not classic, and also a few by newcomers worthy of note. In the first group one must count Josephine Tey's *Four, Five, and Six* (Macmillan, $4.50), that is, three of her novels now reissued in the excellent Murder Revisited series. These are three good ones: *The Daughter of Time*, a tour de force about the historic crimes alleged against Richard III; *The Singing Sands*, a delightful Scottish tale; and *A Shilling for Candles*, a trifle too complicated but still worthy of Miss Tey. These three stand just below her two masterpieces, *The Franchise Affair* and *To Love and Be Wise*.

The ladies, when they put their minds to it, can go on playing variations on the classic genre as well as any other sex one might name: it must be their housekeeping eye and gossip-keeping ear. At any rate, in *What Mrs. McGillicuddy Saw* (Dodd, Mead, $2.95), Agatha Christie does a solid piece of work on the ever-interesting problem of "Was it real or did I dream it?" Combined with the scenically perfect setting of an English train in motion, this uncertainty about a bit of illicit strangulation produces a first-rate story *without* any "little gray cells," except for the murderer.

It would be nice to say as much for Miss Ngaio Marsh's *Singing in the Shrouds* (Little, Brown, $3.50). It too occurs in a good place, which is a ship at sea. Superintendent Roderick Alleyn has a hold on our affections, and in this tale Miss Marsh has returned to verbal sobriety after a period of chitchat run riot. But her other qualities are not equally present: the cast includes some pretty ridiculous figures, especially the captain, and her attention to detail is excessively faulty. I pass on quickly to Helen McCloy's *The Slayer and the Slain* (Random House, $3.50), which is a triumph of handling under difficulty, for the plot hinges on multiple amnesia and never breeds disbelief, even when toward the end one incident seems out of drawing. That small slip is worth overlooking for the sake of superb narrative and solid retrospective detection.

I suspect, on no evidence, that Lee Blackstock, who wrote *The Woman in the Woods* (Crime Club, $2.95), is likewise a woman, despite the dedication of this first book "To my mother." Though it was well received by the critics, I find it pretentious in its avoidance of ratiocination and its wallowing in "insights." The unjustly accused hero, the understanding woman, the wicked doctor, the touching child, are all out of the old theatrical cupboard, but decked out in new psychological toggery. It is a pity that a writer who can evidently handle words and scenes with good judgment and some economy should apply them to this sort of tear-jerker in disguise.

Similarly, I deplore Mr. Maurice Proctor's latest, *The Midnight Plumber* (Harper, $2.95). His earlier work—especially *The Ripper*—was admirable in every respect. Now he gives us a Lancashire version of mass crime followed by a mass chase to catch the mass-ter mind. The chase winds up well, but the opening portions can be summed up as fun with a town map, boredom at so many inches to the mile.

Two other Britons whose work entitles them to attention also deserve a word of regret for opportunities missed. Mr. Eric Ambler's *State of Siege* (Bantam, $.35) is the standard "tight spot in foreign parts," with a luscious native in bed between attacks by the Communists. Here and there, flashes of the old skill in dialogue mark differences between European and Malayan;



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and there is a good passage on a theme neglected since Kipling, the repair of machinery under life-and-death conditions. But the rest is predictable, as are the people and incidents in Allan MacKinnon's *Summons from Baghdad* (Crime Club, $2.95). True, the old Scottish woman's second sight is beautifully done: why then doesn't the author stick to his native heath, about which he once wrote so well?

It is pleasant to observe that another Scot, Mr. Michael Innes, has traveled in the opposite direction. From spinning outré fantasies, he has become terse, ironic, and respectful of time and space. His latest, *The Long Farewell* (Dodd, Mead, $2.95), combines seriousness and foolery in the right proportions and supplies true detection as well. The death of a scholar, whose Shakespearean discoveries are as inexplicable as his belated marriage to two wives at a time, provides Mr. Innes with just the sort of subject he treats best—intellectual people showing their strong egos and sharp minds under stress. Only, Mr. Innes ought not to yield to his penchant for parodying Henry James's style: he can write just as perceptively and wittily in his own person.

The familiar names of Delano Ames and William P. McGivern furnish added illustration of the rule that two out of three established authors of detection are running away from it—Mr. McGivern in the direction of tragic character study, Mr. Ames in the direction of farce. The latter's *She Wouldn't Say Who* (Ives, Washburn, $2.95) says in the title what is wrong with it: utter confusion resulting from multiple silence on the part of theatrical people. Once upon a time the antics of Dagobert Brown and his wife, Jane, were amusing because motivated, but in this tale the availability of a gas oven made me wish it was wide enough to accommodate all the heads in the cast. As for Mr. McGivern's novel, it is very fine, but its relation to mysterious crime is negligible. The ending suggests that the intent was to tell us something about race prejudice and its conquest by the sense and dignity of manhood.

Before concluding with a word about a few books that are not fiction, I must commend—unnecessarily, to be sure—the latest collection by Rex Stout, *Four To Go* (Viking, $2.95). Nero Wolfe and Archie Goodwin have lately promenaded their genius on short strolls only, which I for one lament. But in this group of four, neatly related to the principal holidays of the year, Mr. Stout goes far to justify the intermediate form between novel and short story. Each sample is compact and full of meat; the emotions aroused are strong and various; and the use of the mind is, as always, pre-eminent. What I miss that one used to find in Mr. Stout's novels is the change of pace, which gives at once verisimilitude and the chance for reflection and extended wit. Matthew Arnold, whose *Culture and Anarchy* seems a prophetic allusion to Nero and Archie respectively, would, if writing today, also urge Mr. Stout to go in again for the ampler criticism of life that informed, say, *Some Buried Caesar* and *Too Many Cooks*. I have just reread the reprint of *Fer-de-Lance* (Dell, $.35) and found the substance there too—which shows that all our dean of detection needs is elbow room.

Students of crime in real life (which bears the same relation to crime-for-detection as the Hellenic chieftains did to Greek tragedy) will want to read about Edward Oscar Heinrich (1881-1953), whose life has been written by Mr. Eugene B. Block as *The Wizard of Berkeley* (Coward-McCann, $3.75). Heinrich was a pioneer of scientific crime analysis in this country and is regrettably little known. In more competent hands the story of his career would have made a useful and notable book. As it is given in Mr. Block's badly organized and frequently illiterate work, one has to piece together bits of fact and fit them into what one knows from other sources. Still, this is worth doing, and perhaps this botched effort will provoke a rival equipped to do justice to the subject.

It is fortunately unnecessary to make this wish about the Wizard of Baker Street, whose biographers are not legion, but *a* legion: the Baker Street Irregulars, led by Mr. Edgar W. Smith. His unfaltering hand edits the *Baker Street Journal* as well as issues in reprint form a positively Alexand-



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rian collection of materials for the seeker after Holmesian truth. The latest of these publications is entitled *The Incunabular Sherlock Holmes* (at the Editor's, $5), for it brings together the earliest notable essays on the master. Among them is that by the founder of Holmes scholarship, Monsignor Ronald A. Knox, whose death last year students and readers of detection mourn. Other essays by A. A. Milne, Vernon Rendall, S. C. Roberts, Edmund Pearson, Dorothy Sayers, Christopher Morley, Conan Doyle, and half a dozen others, make this volume a fit companion to the earlier *221 B Baker Street,* edited by Vincent Starrett, and *Baker Street and Beyond,* which is wholly Mr. Smith's work. To obtain these cornerstones of a gentleman's library, one writes to Mr. Smith at (naturally) 221 B Baker Street, Morristown, New Jersey.

This practical hint reminds me that I have always wondered what a reader would do who wanted to buy a paperback he had heard of but could not find on the newsstands. I inquired of Dell Books and was assured that orders for single copies would be filled by Dell Distributing Company, 321 West 44th Street, New York. Of other firms I cannot speak, except to say that a few orders (of nonfiction) addressed to them remained unfilled and unacknowledged. Given the cost of goods and services, this is understandable but not encouraging.

—just like the state of the detective story: one can see how it got where it is and why the new practitioners try to persuade us that their breach of the conventions is nobler than the observance. But if it were not for the old-timers one would be almost entirely deprived. That is why there is such a brisk trade, at Arthur Lovell's and elsewhere, in second-hand copies of the gems produced in the twenties and thirties. Connoisseurs know that the suspense advertised on the jackets of new works is found mainly in waiting to see whether the *next* book will live up to the promise. Suggestions? All that occurs to me may be too much influenced by my recent reading, that is, too simple-minded. For example, I beg that at least the first law of the novel be observed, namely, never to give two or more characters names beginning with the same sounds—Vera and Vanessa, Craig and Creighton. This fault has a direct bearing on the fact that whereas some books cannot be put down, others are never picked up. So much for aesthetics. My second suggestion belongs to eugenics: let the detectives who do not detect pair off with the heroines who are too frightened to scream, and let us hope that their children develop hereditary sterility.

## *Brief Comments*

THE AFFLUENT SOCIETY. By John Kenneth Galbraith. *Houghton Mifflin. $5.00.*

The pages of this book sparkle with brilliant exposition, racy description, novel interpretation, discrete epigrams, sustained satire, flashing wit. In its early chapters and *passim* it presents a highly condensed but lucid outline of the history of economic thought from Adam Smith to Maynard Keynes, adroitly edited to the substantiation of the author's major thesis—that production, once appropriately stressed as a means of mitigating want, has become an end in itself. As such, it embraces a vast and wasteful apparatus for creating or magnifying wants that will furnish it with profitable employment.

Writing more as a lay anthropologist than as an economic technician (here he already holds a union card *cum laude*), Galbraith broods (for he is at pains to say "no one will think this an angry book") over the cultural lag in our economy. "In an atmosphere of private opulence and public squalor," we "view the production of some of the most frivolous goods with pride" while the "large, ready-made needs for schools, hospitals, slum clearance and urban development, sanitation, parks, playgrounds, police, and a thousand other things" go unsatisfied because "the economy is geared to the least urgent set of human wants."

To redress the balance between the "feverish production of goods of no great



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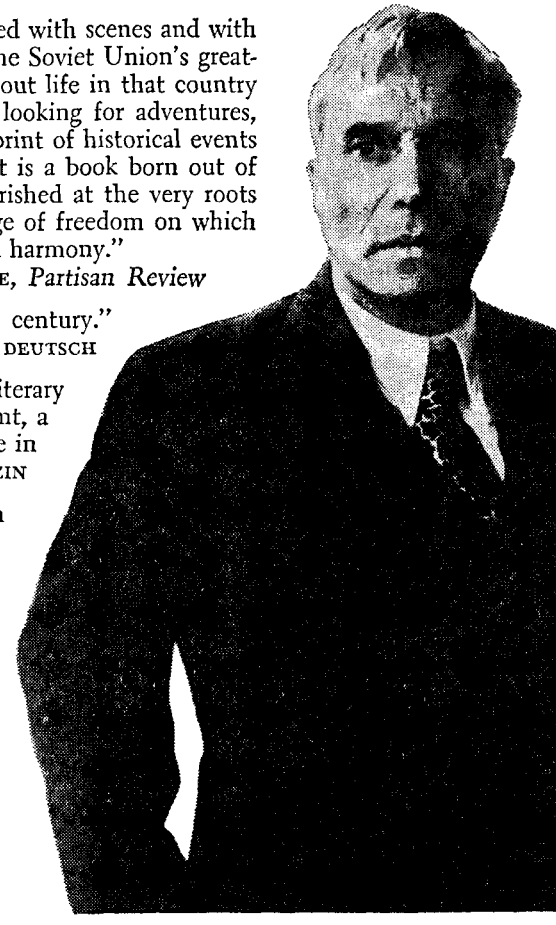

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urgency" and "public services that are now almost totally neglected," the Provident State must assume its rightful role of activating and guiding the affluent society. Hag-ridden as we are by the popular demand for full employment or some "close approach to it, wages and prices are subject to large discretionary movements. The only preventive is some public restraint in this direction." Besides such controls, there must, of course, be drastic resort to the tax weapon—without any squeamishness about the deterrent effect that highly progressive income taxes might have on production or about high sales taxes because they are regressive. If they have such side effects, this would simply get the whole economic process more completely in the public domain —where it could be run properly.

*The Affluent Society* will be read "for kicks" by a large audience because of its verbal brilliance, and with painful slowness by those of Galbraith's professional brethren who are willing to dig for the meaning of his cryptic obiters, differentiate his plausible half-truths, and still do justice to the real penetration of his fearless iconoclasm.

EDWIN G. NOURSE

FOREIGN POLICY: The Next Phase. By Thomas K. Finletter. *Harper. $3.50.*

The views of most writers on current American foreign policy may be divided into two classes. One group—including among others (despite their wide differences in technique) both John Foster Dulles and his predecessor, Dean Acheson—predominantly emphasizes the maintenance of "positions of strength" vis-à-vis the Russians and a reliance on the machinery of the United Nations. The second category —which includes such apparently divergent thinkers as George Kennan and Chester Bowles—is conscious of the limitations of a defensive diplomacy. However, the affirmative recommendations of those writers soar variously into the empyrean, with espousal of a unified, neutralized and disarmed Germany or of multi-billion-dollar investment programs that will quickly transmute Asia into a Garden of Content and pro-Westernism.

The fusion of realism and creative thought is the present book's special virtue. Mr. Finletter believes that the tactic of military and economic assistance for allies, exemplified by NATO and the Marshall Plan, will not continue to suffice in Europe and will never become a viable policy for the uncommitted nations of Asia and Africa.

He concludes that since the Korean war the minds and emotions of men have become the battleground. The new nations are dedicated to neutrality. However, mutual devotion to individual liberty, a drive for peace and disarmament conducted within the United Nations so that Communist Machiavellianism will become evident, and an aid program not correlated to military or political support, may establish an enduring alliance between Asia and America.

ASHER LANS

GERMANY AND FREEDOM: A Personal Appraisal. By James Bryant Conant. *Harvard University Press. $3.00.*

Dr. Conant was concerned, in the Godkin Lectures which this book records, with a number of questions about Germany that need to be borne in mind when there is discussion of relations with that country. How and why did a people rightly so proud of their system of education succumb to the blight of Nazism? Will something comparable happen again? What is the verdict at which competent observers have arrived concerning the Germany that has come into being since 1945? Above all, is there a way in which the major problem of reunification can be solved? The answers Dr. Conant gives are based in part on personal observation and in part on judicious reading. He is optimistic but not lighthearted or gullible.

Perhaps the most interesting and valuable comment is the one Dr. Conant makes concerning the maintenance of mutual confidence with respect to the defense of Europe. He argues that the United States must on the one hand pledge itself to maintaining military strength in Germany, while on the other avoiding suspicious assumptions that the German government may enter



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into a unilateral agreement with Russia. Since he wrote this, the German people have once more expressed, in an important election, their conviction that the best guarantee of liberty, peace and eventual reunification is to be found in union with the West.

GEORGE N. SHUSTER

THE BILL OF RIGHTS. By Learned Hand. *Harvard University Press. $2.50.*

In this brief volume, comprising the Oliver Wendell Holmes lectures, Judge Hand subjects to objective analysis some of the most fundamental political and legal assumptions of our form of government. Though finding no basis in the Constitution for the doctrine of judicial supremacy, and despite his doubts that the Constitutional Convention, had the issue been put to it, would have voted that courts should have power to invalidate acts of Congress, he accepts the doctrine of *Marbury v. Madison* as the only alternative to chaos. Believing that the courts must possess this power as a condition of the successful operation of our government, he nevertheless argues for restraint in its exercise.

Judge Hand rejects the view that the First Amendment, unconditional though its language be, prohibits every federal statutory restriction on free speech. Furthermore, he is skeptical of that interpretation of the due process clause, current among "liberal" jurists, which prescribes greater protection for individual rights than for property rights.

It is a rewarding experience to read and digest the mature thoughts of one of our great judges on these important questions.

DAVID L. MARKS

THE LONESOME ROAD: The Story of the Negro's Part in America. By Saunders Redding. Mainstream of America Series. *Doubleday. $5.75.*

Although ninety-five years after emancipation Negroes in the United States still tread a pioneer road, the milestones their leaders have set up along a sometimes circuitous route point toward conjunction with the ever broadening national highway. Choosing his protagonists from the van, Saunders Redding has written dramatic life-stories of eminent slaves, freedmen and citizens whose names are not included in "white" textbook histories but whose achievements have inspired (in one case, perhaps, deterred) their race and influenced every period and phase of America's biography.

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WORTH TUTTLE HEDDEN

THE UNDISCOVERED SELF. By C. G. Jung. *Atlantic-Little, Brown. $3.00.*

In this book—ably translated from the German by R.F.C. Hull—the eminent Swiss psychiatrist Dr. C. G. Jung examines the crucial problems of the day. He sees our moral development lagging behind the progress in science and technology and finds that "the triumph of the Goddess of Reason" has brought with it "a general neuroticizing of modern man, . . . a dissociation of personality analagous to the splitting of the world today by the Iron Curtain."



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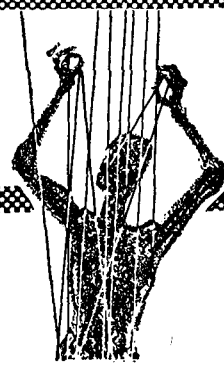

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Dr. Jung is concerned with the fate of the individual human being who stands in danger of being reduced to a statistical unit. Rigorous self-examination and self-knowledge alone can preserve the individuality that is everywhere threatened by the mass. By self-knowledge Dr. Jung means—in particular—an awareness of the unconscious and its contents; for it is in the realm of the unconscious that we meet those dark elements within ourselves, which generally we recognize only in their projection. The unconscious also is the medium from which religious experience flows.

In this era of atomic weapons our very survival will depend on the psychic changes in man. Even the reader who cannot accept Dr. Jung's concepts of the structure of the psyche should find his challenging analysis of the present situation a stimulating and rewarding experience.

ROBERT S. ROSEN

NATURE AND HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE: Essays in Naturalism and in the Theory of History. By John Herman Randall, Jr. *Columbia University Press.* $5.50.

Metaphysics has been unfashionable, if not ridiculed, in Anglo-American philosophical circles since the 1930's. The present dominant schools of linguistic analysis and logical positivism have relegated metaphysical inquiry to the museum of philosophical curiosities, along with the "pineal gland" of Descartes and the "guiding hand" of Adam Smith. But the problems with which metaphysics has traditionally been concerned cannot be ignored so easily, for they continue to perplex the contemporary philosopher.

In this new study, John Herman Randall, Jr., treats two different aspects of metaphysical inquiry: a theory of history and a theory of nature. The first half of the book investigates historical knowledge and conceives of the theory of history as an "enterprise of metaphysical analysis." The second then goes on to define metaphysics in terms of the "behavioristic, operational, and contextual view of 'being'" that the author has come to find in Aristotle and John Dewey. He applies his method of metaphysical analysis, termed by him "functional realism," to five fundamental philosophical problems: Substance, the One and the Many, Mind, Universals, and Value.

Perhaps the importance of any philosophical essay is not the answers that it proffers, but the suggestions that it does not pursue. One such suggestion is that many of John Dewey's statements could be paralleled by those of the Freiburg existentialist, Martin Heidegger. The author is impressed with Heidegger's phenomenological description of human experience, which, like Dewey's thought, emphasizes the naturalistic inclusion of man in Being, the self-world polarity, and the consequence that all human experiences have ontological implications.

ROBERT TURVENE

NEW BOTTLES FOR NEW WINE. By Julian Huxley. *Harper.* $4.50.

Julian Huxley, master biologist, has never allowed the weight of learning to burden his style, nor has his zeal for specialized research withered his ardor for synthesis. Indeed, Huxley is a master of biology because he is a master of synthesis. "The absence of any unifying set of concepts . . ." he writes, "is . . . the world's major disease, at least its most serious symptom." The new wines cannot be contained within the old bottles, for "the potent new vintages now brewing" are new concepts, new principles, new symbols of meaning. They are the understandings that stem from the data of evolution—cosmic, human and social. Few have done as much to integrate modern biological research for specialists or to integrate evolutionary meanings for other scholars. These essays, some of which have appeared previously, range from biological heredity to religion, from ideals of progress to the function of science in democracy.

Huxley is a citizen of the cosmos, conscious of his "cosmic duty." Those impelled to dispute his naturalism, his optimism, his vision of a brave new transhuman world should first refresh their knowledge of Heike crabs, cryptic coloration and life's improbable likenesses.

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OF STARS AND MEN. By Harlow Shapley. *Beacon. $3.50.*

Harlow Shapley, director of the Harvard Observatory for thirty years and a renowned authority on cosmography, offers this information-packed little book (157 pages) as a "human response to an expanding universe." He is assured and emphatic as to what the stars have to say to men; he is more tentative, although optimistic, about what men can say and do by way of response.

Dr. Shapley has a definitely deflationary intent: man is "peripheral," even "incidental," when seen in cosmic perspective. The earth is a relatively small planet in a galaxy of 100 billion stellar bodies—one galaxy among billions our telescopes can bring into vision and "possibly trillions beyond our knowing." He estimates that planetary systems capable of sustaining organic life number 100 million at the very least.

Here is matter to end all anthropocentrism. Indeed, it would be strange if in such a universe there were not races of sentient beings that have made a much more impressive showing both in intelligence and in morals than the struggling inhabitants of earth. On balance, however, Dr. Shapley is hopeful concerning man's future. "It is probable," he concludes, "that the men of the future will overcome our shortcomings and build out of our thoughts and acts a finer mental and social structure—one that is in better keeping with Nature's heavy investment in the locally dominant human race."

F. Ernest Johnson

EARTH'S SHIFTING CRUST: A Key to Some Basic Problems of Earth Science. By Charles H. Hapgood with the collaboration of James H. Campbell. *Pantheon. $6.50.*

The origin of mountains, the extinction of the great mammoths, the shape of the earth, even the nature of continents and ocean basins, are explained by Hapgood on the basis of the apparently simple hypothesis that the earth's crust has shifted over the central portions of the earth during geologic history. The sliding of the crust is attributed to the eccentricity of the icecaps relative to the earth's axis of rotation. The icecaps exert a torque on the crust, causing them to slide in such a way that many marvelous events result. A vast amount of the complex literature has been examined by Hapgood, and pertinent arguments presented that favor his hypothesis. A generous Foreword by Albert Einstein adds an air of authority to this book. Further authority is sought in the letters and comments of distinguished physicists, geophysicists and geologists.

Despite the apparent simplicity of Hapgood's thesis, the problem is an exceedingly complex one that has baffled geophysicists for many years. One of the major uncertainties in Hapgood's argument relates to the isostatic compensation of the continental glaciers. The preponderance of evidence is that these glaciers are neatly balanced. If they are, then Hapgood's force is minute, and the crust is exceedingly stable. Further problems are raised by the present-day observed stability of the crust, which would not be expected in Hapgood's hypothesis. Despite the claims of simplicity, Hapgood's theories are exceedingly complex, have not been worked out quantitatively, and leave one with the strong feeling of having read some entertaining science fiction.

Gordon MacDonald

ARABESQUE AND HONEYCOMB. By Sacheverell Sitwell. *Random House. $6.00.*

This book bears the stamp of character. Mr. Sitwell, poet and *aficionado* of architecture, painting, birds, flowers and music, gives here an account of a ten-week hegira through the Middle East. Traveling by air and limousine, Mr. Sitwell's arrangements are impressive in themselves, but it is his own curiosity and enthusiasm that recommend him as a cicerone.

Three things, however, seem to me unfortunate: first, he rarely gives an over-all view of the building under discussion, but rather plunges instantly into an evocation of the particular shade of blue of the tiles over a single column. Second, his allusions are relentlessly obscure: the passing scene continually reminds him of scenes in paint-



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ings by little-known artists or of buildings and landscapes in the remoter corners of North Africa, Sicily or Greece. And third, it is disappointing, in terms of gossip, never to be made privy to the gatherings of the elegant and high-placed with whom the author (according to the Preface) constantly wined and dined, but only to be told of unpleasant encounters with wily natives, of bad food, endless waits and atrocious service.

But in spite of all this, Mr. Sitwell's new book is packed with color, spirit and information, as well as glowing photographs. No reader will waste time following in his stylish footprints.

JOAN CUYLER

WILLIAM BYRD OF VIRGINIA: The London Diary (1717-1721) and Other Writings. Edited by Louis B. Wright and Marion Tinling. *Oxford University Press. $10.00.*

With the publication of this volume, all portions of the Diary of William Byrd II known to be extant are available in print, covering the years 1709-12, 1717-21 and 1739-41. Two-thirds of the present text is concerned with Byrd's life in London, 1717-19, the rest with his life in Virginia; and he seems to have been equally in his element in either society. The entries are somewhat more routine for this period; perhaps his daily recordings had become so habitual that he was inclined to condense or omit details that enrich the historical value of the Diary for 1709-12. The entries for 1739-41 are still briefer.

The confidential nature of Byrd's Diary gives it special importance as source material. On eighteenth-century Virginia and Virginians it is a unique document, written by a planter-aristocrat whose contemporaries produced nothing comparable to it and few of whom put pen to paper beyond their letter writing and business accounts. Therefore, the historian may generalize with more certainty about Byrd than about his associates, whether it be concerning diet or the reading of Hebrew before breakfast. While the Diary contains information on innumerable subjects for scholars in diverse fields of research, it is too repetitious and pedestrian to sustain the interest of the general reader whose curiosity has been piqued by reports of Byrd's diversions as a man about town.

Mr. Wright has provided an excellent biographical sketch of Byrd. Unfortunately, the volume includes in abridged form the essays on the *History of the Dividing Line*, *A Journey to the Land of Eden* and *A Progress to the Mines*. They deserve to be reproduced in full.

LESTER J. CAPPON

THE LETTERS OF EMILY DICKINSON. Edited by Thomas H. Johnson and Theodora V. W. Ward. Three volumes. *Harvard University Press. $25.00.*

Writing to her brother at the age of twelve (it is the first letter of this admirable collection), Emily Dickinson describes her return to a hen's nest: the day before she had left a single egg there, but now "there had not been any laid and the one that was there had gone so I suppose a skonk had been there or else a hen in the shape of a skonk and I don't know which." Her last known letter, written forty-four years later from her deathbed, reads in full: "Little Cousins,/Called back./Emily."

Between these two the editors have placed, certainly as firmly and clearly as they ever can be, more than a thousand letters and more than a hundred brief prose fragments. Of the approximately one hundred letters here published for the first time and the many more published for the first time in full, all are presented with the clarity of rigorous but unobtrusive scholarship. Rarely do any letters lack the playfulness of the first, although as their author's seclusion deepened, the play of fancy became an aphoristic intensity and the letters themselves were virtual drafts of poems. Emily Dickinson's letters were finally her only real relation to her world. She said in middle life, "A Letter always feels to me like immortality because it is the mind alone without corporeal friend"; and the mind here exhibited is one of the most intense in our literary history.

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literature in restoring to us, as faithfully as research can, all the prose and verse of the poet who poignantly conceived of all her writing as "Letters to the World."

G. ARMOUR CRAIG

D. H. LAWRENCE: A Composite Biography. Volume II, 1919-1925. Gathered, arranged and edited by Edward Nehls. *University of Wisconsin Press. $7.50.*

This is a fascinating book, even though it is not so much a biography as the material for one. Here fifty-five people reminisce about Lawrence, most of them (such as Rebecca West) with respect and insight, a few (such as Witter Bynner, Norman Douglas and J. M. Murry) with jealousy and blindness.

"The only reason for living is to be fully alive," says Lawrence; and by alive he means as rich as possible in nature, body, human relationships and mind. Here he explores places that make him feel more alive than England, particularly New Mexico and Mexico; and in his writings he imagines individuals, groups, religions, governments, even whole civilizations devoted to aliveness. Yes, he is a romantic. But he is also a realist. Yes, he experiments with dictatorship and primitivism; he gives himself too thoroughly to the role of Desperate Modern Man. But at least he is trying to save "good warm life" from "mechanical death." And as one watches him living to the absolute limit despite tuberculosis, he almost convinces one that there *are* "gods of life," that they *will* triumph over "the gods of death," and that he himself is a shining sign.

DEXTER MARTIN

THE PRESENT AGE IN BRITISH LITERATURE. By David Daiches. *Indiana University Press. $5.00.*

With his usual fluency, David Daiches has made a highly readable introduction to modern British literature. In amazingly short space, he outlines the modern movement in poetry, fiction, criticism and drama, without losing sight of the changes in the movement and the differences among the writers. Tracing the poetic revolution from Yeats and Eliot through the Auden circle of the thirties to Dylan Thomas, he concludes that the latest poetry is less witty than visionary, that Blake has replaced Donne as the presiding genius.

He is most interesting on fiction where he concentrates on Joyce, Virginia Woolf and the novel of private consciousness. "If, speaking very generally, we can say that the earlier English novel is always, directly or obliquely, about the relation of gentility and morality, then the corresponding theme for the modern novel would be the relation between loneliness and love." Mr. Daiches shows very neatly how modern critcism, which began in England with Richards and Empson, was elaborated by the American New Critics and has since returned to England as an American novelty. Mr. Daiches is not entirely sold on Shaw or on the poetic dramas of Eliot, Auden and Isherwood, and Fry.

This is a book for the layman. More than half of it is devoted to a useful annotated bibliography of modern British literature.

ROBERT LANGBAUM

MAN IN MODERN FICTION: Some Minority Opinions on Contemporary American Writing. By Edmund Fuller. *Random House. $3.50.*

Mr. Fuller is one of the few critics who follow contemporary fiction book by book, and because of his own sharply cut point of view, he is able to judge it decisively and clearly. He speaks for the Judeo-Christian tradition, which we all inherit, but which has grown somewhat woolly with many modern people; and having this always in mind, he anathematizes a certain group of novelists who are much in the news. He disapproves of censorship, and he is right in saying that neither prudery nor puritanism is the basis of his thinking, so that in condemning the "Yahoo herd of the tough novelists," he speaks with a kind of authority that cannot be denied.

Mr. Fuller brings to a head a widespread complaint of the world-war years that a debased and corrupted image of man has become current in many novels, that the "seamy side of man" is treated by the nov-



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elists as if it were the sum total of man. The female zombies and the bums have become the "beautiful little people" with what Mr. Fuller calls the "new compassion," in which, thanks to a kind of inverted puritanism, the traditional moral framework has completely dropped away. Others have noted this descent from the vision of the whole man on the part of so many talented and influential writers, but no one perhaps has presented it with the wit, humor and incisiveness that Mr. Fuller brings to the most vital of subjects.

VAN WYCK BROOKS

AMERICAN MODERNS. By Maxwell Geismar. *Hill and Wang. Paper, $1.95; Cloth, $3.95.*

American Moderns, subtitled "From Rebellion to Conformity," is the work of a literary critic in rebellion against everything in literature that is fat and smug and woukian (to use a word derived from Maxwell Geismar's own "Woukism").

Unlike the New Critics, against whom Geismar fires many a wicked bullet—"The New Criticism also expresses an abhorrence of 'politics' except for its own advancement"—his approach to the American novel is broadly human. A sense of continuity with the past, the American past of Thoreau and Mark Twain and Walt Whitman, sharpens his pen when he writes of the present: "an age of terrorism, disguise, shifting personalities and anonymous men." This social feeling is combined with an equally passionate feeling for the individual man, the separate and unique human being. Society and the individual are the two equal lenses in the Geismar set of critical spectacles, through which he studies the fictions and the minds and hearts of the fiction-makers: Hemingway, Dos Passos, Faulkner, Sinclair Lewis, Wolfe, Steinbeck, Marquand; and such "newcomers" as Mailer, Hersey, Algren, Salinger, Bellow, James Jones, William Styron and John Howard Griffin.

Geismar believes that the first novels of Jones, Styron and Griffin are "among the three or four best novels of the decade. (And where, in fact, is the fourth?)" He builds a persuasive case. Nobody, not even a New Critic, can accuse him of sitting on the literary fence.

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BENJAMIN APPEL

THE FUGITIVES: A Critical Account. By John M. Bradbury. *University of North Carolina Press. $5.00.*

As a closely knit, homogeneous group of writers, the Nashville Fugitives were without parallel in our country's letters. Save perhaps for Merrill Moore, always a law unto himself, the better Fugitives—Allen Tate, John Crowe Ransom, Donald Davidson, Robert Penn Warren—shared not only a magazine and an acquaintanceship during the 1920's, but an aesthetic more common than disparate, and a like conception of the relationship of literature and society.

Now comes Mr. John M. Bradbury with a useful first account of the individual Fugitives. He devotes chapters to their poetry, their fiction, their criticism. Especially with Ransom and Warren he is again and again lucid and perceptive. With Tate, I think, he is less successful, perhaps because of a basic lack of sympathy with that poet's intellectual and philosophical position; and my own feeling is that he gives rather short shrift to Donald Davidson, again because of a dislike of his attitudes and activities. Although a little too eager to pronounce this or that poem "Ransomic," and somewhat inclined to cast Tate in the role of Mefisto, Mr. Bradbury has produced a book filled with excellent analysis of these men's works, as well as an intriguing appraisal of their interrelationship. It is a no-



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J. B. By Archibald MacLeish. *Houghton Mifflin. $3.50.*

This profoundly significant play marks a milestone in modern poetic drama. Mr. MacLeish has for almost a quarter of a century attempted "to find a verse form capable of catching and carrying the rhythm of the spoken language of his time and place." He discovered the technical means as long ago as *Panic*, his first verse play, and found it in the use of accents rather than syllables. But it is with *J. B.* that he has reached the culmination of his efforts, for it is here that the inextricable fusion of form and content has been achieved.

And it is mightily achieved! *J. B.* is the Book of Job humanized. Where Milton tried, in vain, to justify the ways of God to Man, Mr. MacLeish has counterpoised the Tetragrammaton with the Digrammaton: God and Man on equal footing. In this dialogic relationship between God, stripped of all attributes save omnipotence, and Man, who seeks justice, the true dignity of humanity is established. J. B., Mr. MacLeish's hero, refusing the seductive comforts of historical necessity, psychological determinism and original sin, assumes the responsibility for his acts. The gulf between him and a deity who—and this is a revolutionary conception—does not comprehend him is unbridgeable; but between himself and his fellows there are the bonds of hope and love: "there is always someone waiting at the door," always something to be found "growing in the ashes," if only we "blow on the coal of the heart."

The thunder's frightening roar, the lightning's searing flash, the sea's turbulent deeps are all fearfully met but overcome by the courage and ultimate wisdom of man.

RICHARD HUETT

A FRIEND IN POWER. By Carlos Baker. *Scribner's. $3.95.*

The theme of this thoughtful novel about academic life is the assumption of responsibility—and its concomitant, power—by a group and an individual. The story spans a year in the life of a university seeking a new president, and in the lives of members of the advisory committee elected by the faculty to help find the right man.

The central figure, Edward Tyler, chairman of the modern language department, is a good and responsible person, a well-intentioned hero who succeeds in his intentions because of his soundness. Unlike Cozzens' Arthur Winner, who was, as Howard Nemerov said, "busy but not involved," Tyler is genuinely involved—with his happy marriage, his children, his teaching and administrative work, his friendships with hard-working colleagues. His involvement, however, is not shown in full emotional depth. The author's literary range is deliberately set in a middle ground between the extremes of joy and tragedy.

For this reason, the reader's major involvement seems meant to be not with Tyler as an overshadowing individual, but with his community, which is not a sheltered, stuffy academe any more than it is a witty, wicked one of sharp jockeying for power. What this campus helps to create and preserve is a balanced dedication to people and learning—to the search for truth. For the man who is finally offered the presidency, the conflict is between the individual search for truth as teacher and writer, and the use of power to help others join the search. Tyler's preoccupation with Voltaire, the writer of incitement, threads through the book, and Henry Adams' "A friend in power is a friend lost" is the thesis that Tyler and his colleagues have to ponder.

The writing is expressive, beautifully controlled, and clearly communicative. The novel does exactly what it sets out to do, and is in this sense a model novel. I wish it had attempted more; like Tyler himself, the book lacks the exhilaration of a creative force so strong that it is in high tension with the control.

MARY TOWNSEND

A PLACE WITHOUT TWILIGHT. By Peter S. Feibleman. *World. $4.75.*

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unusually good year for new fiction is *A Place Without Twilight*, written by a young man, emphatically a novelist (he has also been a theater manager and an actor), who spent his childhood in New Orleans, where his story is set. His protagonist is an almost white mulatto girl, Cille, who tells her own story in 382 closely set pages that illuminate the awesome wonderland of the South for the "too" light-colored Negro. Happily, as Mr. Feibleman has created her, Cille is no toy of her environment, but a very remarkable and considerable young woman, whose existence becomes so real to the reader that he may forget the author's skill in characterizing her. Taught from earliest childhood *never to care*, Cille finds it in her nature, as she grows toward womanhood, to care very deeply; and in violating the prime folk law of survival, she alone of her family does survive—not to shrink down farther than they, but to search deep into the intense, lyrical places of the heart for her pale image. The reader finds an absorbing portrait of a girl who, like Gertrude Stein's Melanctha, "had not found it easy with herself to make her wants and what she had, agree."

Written with a richness and a copiousness of expression that derive from the author's sure knowledge of his narrator-heroine and her world, *A Place Without Twilight* deserves reading, even in a good year.

HENRY CARLISLE

VICTORIA AT NIGHT AND OTHER STORIES. By Uli Beigel. *Random House. $3.00.*

Uli Beigel's first book of short stories reveals a marriage of vision and talent that is as sensitive as it is courageous. She puts her gaze clearsightedly on aspects of our lives and our selves, recognition following recognition with relentless and marvelous regularity.

Miss Beigel's vision is so right for her skill as a writer. She writes mostly of and for people who, I would say, are now between twenty and thirty. It is a generation bred by liberal parents who were more prepared to think themselves wrong than to hazard that they might be right on any given subject, parents who were both more disillusioned and more naïve than their children.

She writes of the impotence of the young struggling to understand the rules of grownups, the loneliness of each human being. In "World Without a Sun" a young girl, visiting in a strange, close-knit town, loses the sense of her own reality, but eventually begins to understand the need for ritual and affirmation, the nature of commitment.

It is perhaps not so marvelous that a twenty-three-year-old has written so understandingly of the pain of growing up. But Miss Beigel's range is wide, and always more seems to be implied than is actually stated. One rereads to see how it was accomplished. The mystery remains, a kind of echoing reticence on the part of the author.

Her faults as a writer have to do, I think, with her present phase of development—she now deals mainly in and with abstractions. Her chief characters, the lost, cerebrally passionate girls of "Victoria at Night," the title story, and "The Merger," suffer from being unable to live. It remains to be seen if Miss Beigel can write as perceptively and audaciously of the warmer realities of maturity. I think she can.

DIANA CHANG



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# CONtroversy

## THE SOVIET

Harold J. Berman in his statement of Communist achievement ["The Devil and Soviet Russia": AMERICAN SCHOLAR, Spring, 1958] has ventured onto forbidden soil but paid toll for his passage and for assurance of a path whereby he might return.

Communism is the "wrong direction." Communism is "evil." The problem, therefore, is *how* to fight communism. One may not pause to reason *why*.

Nor does Mr. Berman tell us why. True, he does point to certain "evil doctrines" of communism, the doctrine of world revolution and the doctrine of dictatorship of the proletariat. But history is replete with revolutions which are glorified in American literature, and this includes our own. And if dictatorship of the proletariat is dictatorship at all, and not mere oxymoron, it is offset by its effect on selection of beneficiary.

Assume, nevertheless, that dictatorship of any kind is evil. Does Mr. Berman paint a picture of freedom here? On the contrary, he weaves, without announcing it, a story of present American dictatorship. He tells us that most of what is written here about life in Russia is a "ridiculous distortion of reality," and that the brainwashing thereby accomplished is so effective that any "objective" report on Soviet institutions fails to pierce the wall of the resulting "preconceptions."

Does he suggest that these "preconceptions" are a product of mere stupidity? Indeed not, for it is "despair," he says, that American correspondents in Russia face when they prepare their reports on what they have seen. And if they write what they have in fact seen, an editorial will also appear making it clear to the readers that the reporter was having an opium dream. The freedom hidden in the law books does not dispel the fear that rides in the market place.

It would not be polite to suggest that the riddles which streak and cloud Mr. Berman's logic derive from a subconscious layer of the same fear, that his platitudinous protestations of the evil in communism are but obeisance he must make before the American dictatorship, and the toll he must pay to it, in order to find a forum for the truth that he knows in his heart he must speak. But he is not alone. It is the common lot of those who would find virtue of any kind in a system different from our own at the seat of power that they must assume an attitude of ambivalence, because though love be the parcel borne, only hate can unlock the door.

Since Mr. Berman makes the myopic assumption that ours is a democracy, he makes no examination of its record. He raises no eyebrow at our method of two parties joined together in holy bipartisanship. It is a matter of common knowledge that the two parties vie with each other for the favors of the same groups and that each attempts to out-Herod the other in servile enforcement of the dictatorship which in fact controls this land. The Hobson's choice between McCarthy and McCarran, between Van Devanter and Vinson, is the measure of the democracy that sent Oppenheimer into occupational exile and another, on the basis of the very opposite record and nothing more, to the doorstep of the White House.

Mr. Berman finally discovers a method of salvation in voluntary associations to put justice, mercy and morality above economic security. Here he shows a contempt for history and a contempt for human nature. There are, indeed, those who sacrifice economic security and more for principle, and also those who sacrifice it for a vision of power or a dream of a pot of gold. It is such individuals who propel the race on its forward path. But they are the few. There was many a scene in the Great Depression to convince the most skeptical that for the masses unless there is economic security, justice, mercy and morality are but space



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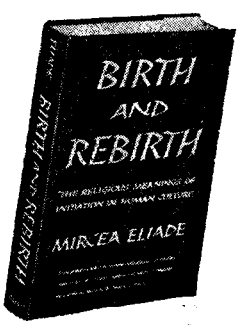


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whispers that have no relation to life on earth. It is this very fact that makes possible a dictatorship under a cloak of formal democracy.

So far we have assumed Mr. Berman's premise that dictatorship is evil. Perhaps Mr. Berman uses the term "evil" in some special American sense. Certainly he has neglected to consider the numerous countries that make no pretense at being democracies although their economies are just as capitalist as our own.

In any case, there is a serious question whether the democracy for which Mr. Berman longs is possible at the technological level we have reached, in which economic independence is an anachronism. The economy has become a single organism, and its primary test is its sustained ability, as in the case of any organism, to produce and to distribute to its segments what it produces. Even as ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny, phylogeny may evolve into a new ontogeny. Good and evil are but subjective reflections of the objective organization that technology compels, and technology is part and parcel of evolution. What appears as evil may be but the larva or chrysalis of a future good.

GEORGE T. ALTMAN
Beverly Hills, California

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The editors of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR have invited me to reply to Mr. Altman's comments. Most of his remarks are, I believe, answered in my original article—which, I feel bound to add, I can scarcely recognize from his analysis of it.

The article certainly stated what in my view is evil in the Soviet system—its doctrines of proletarian dictatorship and world revolution, its practice of terror, its insistence upon absolute subservience to Communist party discipline and the party line, its faith in economic and technological progress as the ultimate goal of human endeavor. It also indicated some of the features of the Soviet system that in my view have virtue—such as its program of educa-



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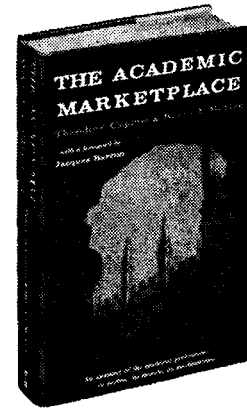


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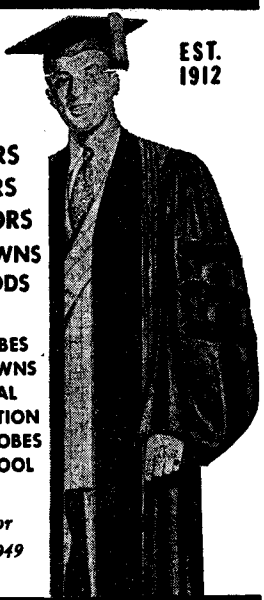

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tion and of medical care, its current law reform movement, its capacity to meet the need for unity and a common social purpose.

I do not agree with Mr. Altman's assessment of the American system of government. If anything, we are threatened by anarchy rather than by dictatorship. To attempt, however, to draw up a single balance sheet of the virtues and vices of Soviet communism and American democracy, as I believe Mr. Altman would have had me do, was not the task I set myself. I started by trying to explain why even well-educated Americans have such distorted ideas of what life in the Soviet Union is like. The explanation inevitably led to a discussion of the common fallacy that if a system is fundamentally evil then it cannot succeed and the people who live under it must be wretched.

It may be worth adding that I wrote the article in June of 1957, several months before the first Soviet sputnik was launched. Since that time many Americans have fallen victim to the converse fallacy that if a system is successful and if it provides its people with many satisfactions then it cannot be evil. I suspect that Mr. Altman, in spite of himself, has been influenced by our "good guys versus bad guys" philosophy and by our worship of the false goddess Success.

HAROLD J. BERMAN
Law School of Harvard University

## PLEASURE AND REALITY

Alas, even at first glance Daniel Lerner's alignment of comfort and fun with morality sounds too good to be true. ["Comfort and Fun: Morality in a Nice Society": AMERICAN SCHOLAR, Spring, 1958] Reduce this to my rigid and puritanical background if you will; however, my lamentations do not merely reflect the bias of heritage. They arise more consciously and directly from what we know today about the psychological conditions that foster growth and development of individuals, and even

*(Continued on page 536)*



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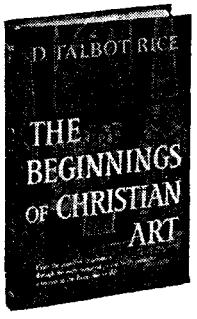


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*(Continued from page 532)*

of civilizations. I felt as I read Mr. Lerner's article that perhaps something might be gained from spelling out the psychological implications for the individual who lives and grows up in the climate in which the culture itself not only condones but places a great premium on pleasure and comfort. I suggest this because the cultural endorsement of pleasure as morality runs in the face of Freud's postulation that the pleasure principle and the reality principle are antagonistic to each other, and eternally destined to remain so. This formulation is one of the basic psychoanalytic tenets, intimately related to the biological and cultural conditions which mold the individual. I would like to discuss Freud's thinking with the help of an example that I think will show why fun and morality are not only strange bedfellows, but in fact cannot be in the same bed together.

As example I am selecting an economic development which is so related to today's "popular culture" or "suburbia" or our "consumption-orientation" that many have felt it to be the *sine qua non* for these sociological transformations—installment plan buying. The inextricable intimacy of credit buying with the very comfortable conditions of modern life needs no belaboring; as Mr. Lerner has said, the theory that every man has a right to comfortable conditions of life is the economic counterpart of the theory that man has to be continuously entertained. So in a sense, installment buying epitomizes the pleasure-reality alignment that Mr. Lerner espouses. Now let us look at what this means.

Installment plan buying emphasizes the enjoyment today, which we pay for tomorrow, the next day, and for as long as 1,080 days to come. With installment buying, the primary desire is to have the tangible goods immediately, for the pleasure is in actual possession, with little concern for the encumbered future. In fact, the very heap of encumbrances is not too conducive to thinking about the future. The goods involved in installment buying are not so lasting or permanent that the original pleasure is maintained at the first high level of satisfaction. The appliances and vehicles that form the bulk of credit buying have usually undergone considerable stress and deterioration by the time they can finally be called one's own. Even such "perishables" as trips and vacations are on an "experience now, pay later" plan, so that what joyful memories one brings back are revived on the first of each month—and, I am sure, with considerable ambivalence.

This is in sharp contrast with the operation of Freud's pleasure-reality polarity. Psychoanalysis speaks out plainly for the individual's holding off present satisfactions in the hope of greater rewards in the future. This is implicit in the genetic-historic transformation from the child to the adult. The child advancing from infancy to adulthood relinquishes the tremendous gratifications which he knows and has known in early phases of development, not so much because they are not satisfying or are incompletely so, but because the expectation is always created that greater rewards and satisfactions are potentially forthcoming in later stages. The appetites today are held in abeyance in anticipation of the feast that is fantasied for tomorrow. And the very unknown and ambiguous character of the far-off goal serves in part as the stimulus for orientation toward it. The ability to hold off expectations today in the hope of greater fulfillment in the future is implicit in the definition of maturity or of adjustment, if you will. Maturity implies an abandonment of substitute gratification, of the gratification that is only ephemeral, or only immediate. Freud refers to the ability of the mature individual to direct his functioning steadily and systematically toward goals which may be tentative, sketchy, distant, and yet which have sufficient substance to hold promise of reward and security. This demands the acceptance of certain frustrations, the build up of anxiety and tensions, the application of intellectual resources in making rational decisions and choices, and the capacity to sustain and nurture one's self during these periods of striving.

Because sociological observers have long associated the diminishing of individual



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freedom, the replacing of the bounty with the bounds, the restraint under the guise of regulation, with economic inequality, it is curious and even bewildering to find the situation strangely the same with installment buying where economic scarcity vanishes and abundance is in plain view. Here the economic milieu takes a rather remarkable resemblance to the all-good and benevolent mother who plies all her children with the stores and the fruits. But as examination often shows this mother to be motivated only to tie completely and unconditionally all her children to her in the way she wants them to be tied, so the proviso of the society that permits credit buying is similarly suspect. All the planning and manipulation of the kinds of goods produced for consumption through credit buying leave little doubt that the nature of the ties has been well determined in advance. Pleasure seems to have an old master in a new guise.

Let us look at the kind of dependence on society that installment buying promotes. What has always characterized the individual's relationship to society has been the sometimes stormy, sometimes quiescent, but ever-present striving of man for freedom and independence. This struggle has always been fired and kept alive by the inflexibility and coldness of reality toward the demands for great and immediate pleasure and full satisfaction. But now the culture encourages the individual in his demands for pleasure, and in fact assists its easy initial attainment. And man, unwittingly, basks and relaxes in the assured providential nature of society. It cannot be accidental that there is little pervasive concern among the credit buyers about the amount of their indebtedness. They appear neither worried nor indifferent about being mortgaged to the hilt. Rather, they are quite certain that were any severe financial crisis to develop that would threaten their economic stability, the government would declare a moratorium on all debts. So there is no respite in installment buying.

It is interesting to speculate on the psychological appeal of this economic development, for certainly its growth must play into certain attitudes and values that have been conditioned through learning and experience. This cannot be explained merely as reflective of the acquisitive tendencies that have long been attributed to our culture, or of the desire to seek tangible evidences of security. Certainly the role of the peer group, which Riesman points out as providing the orientation and motivation for others of the group, must play a role; but on the individual psychological level, we must think of how we hold in our memories or in the unconscious in full force the promises of pleasures of the past, and the expectations that some day they will be fulfilled. Freud pointed out that the very fact that reality has continually to be reestablished in the development of man indicates that the return of the repressed is always a possibility. The presence of so many of the previously repressed infantile elements in credit buying must, at least in part, account for its dramatic spread. The timing aspects and the opportunity for abundant overt gratification with little frustration have the flavor of childhood dependency; and in the spirit of childhood's magical thinking, installment buyers are oriented to the present, unheeding of the future, and quite certain they will continue to be nurtured. The attitudes of irresponsibility and the seeking out of more gigantic pleasure-providers which would be expected with this kind of dependency are self-evident.

When the commodity plays an exaggerated role in society and this role is condoned and directed by the culture itself, the implications of this direction cannot be lightly tossed aside. Direction which is overtly labeled and recognizable as such is one thing—but direction concealed in the mask of providence is another. The ties that come as part and parcel of installment buying have some obvious ramifications, and some that are not so obvious. And even the obvious ones are more than slightly obscured. Credit buying, functioning as it does, with possession of pleasure-stuffs now and frustration doled out at regular periodic intervals, works in the direction of mobilizing tendencies toward de-



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nial and repression in the psychological lives of the participants. But more disquieting is the actual manipulation to which this kind of societal dependence lends itself. The installment buyer is literally indebted and mortgaged, and so bound is subject to whatever kinds of control and exploitation society wishes to promote. The ability to act on individual decision is radically reduced, the very obduracy of the encumbrance only becoming apparent when one wants to initiate a change in his manner of work. Then reality's rigidity and implacability reappear. The credit buyer has been seduced by immediate gratification, and by a sleight-of-contract has opened himself as a pawn to societal manipulation.

Though it would seem that the workings of reality under the motivation of pleasure would only serve to unleash a wealth of pleasurable experience, the merging of the two spheres is unfortunately not necessarily that. Riesman has described the "leveling off" of experiences as they become less separate and less distinct from one another; and he has shown in regard to the work-play spheres of life how each loses some of its meaningfulness as it spills over and becomes like the other in attitude, morality and even actual activity. The sameness is conducive to compulsive participation and drains off genuine satisfactions. As reality becomes more identified with pleasure, and pleasure more with reality, pleasure becomes diluted, for the pleasure that goes with mocking, outwitting and circumventing the inflexible reality is lessened.

It is striking to note how many of the features described clinically identify the personality structure of the infantile character, for it is this diffuse and poorly crystallized kind of personality that seeks out and adopts whatever permits the quick and temporary gratification while at the same time trying to deny inner discomforts and anxieties. That this kind of "pseudo-adjustment" has little stabilizing power is apparent from the alarming pace at which credit-buying mounts. Evidently there is inadequate sustenance despite the continuous grasping for heightened pleasures, for more immediately felt satisfactions, and for reassurance that one is experiencing at all. A reality placed in the service of pleasure would be a reality enslaved to infantilism, reinforcing and perpetuating it in the formation of character.

The application of institutionalized categories to the province of the pleasure principle, as in installment buying, places value judgment where none was intended. Drive or instinctual phenomena have been characterized by their lack of inherent or preconceived notions of goodness or evil. This is very important since the biological drives are considered to play such a significant role in determining the uniqueness, potential and inner resource of an individual. As Trilling has stated, the biological orientation of psychoanalysis provides the self with a separateness and a liberation from the presses of culture. The imposition of moral categories that comes with the merging of reality and pleasure curtails the free play of individual faculties—and when this is done under the guise of greater fulfillment, individual freedom is seriously endangered.

Perhaps psychologists view this development with too jaundiced a third ear, with their own predilections as to how individuals reflect the society of which they are a part and determine its direction, making them needlessly concerned. And yet I think it is proper and even incumbent upon sociologists to take note of what other sciences can contribute to what is happening now and to the prediction of what may follow. To wait and see what develops, as Lerner suggests, may be our only legitimate course at this point; but I am not at all sure that this position does not have in it too much of the pleasure in the mysteries, doubts and uncertainties of what is, and too little of the irritable reaching after fact and reason that characterizes the very life processes of man.

BERNICE T. EIDUSON
Hacker Foundation for Psychiatric
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Miss Eiduson bases her comments on what she regards as the gospel according to Freud: "The cultural endorsement of pleas-



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ure as morality runs in the face of Freud's postulation that the pleasure principle and the reality principle are antagonistic to each other, and eternally destined to remain so." Her claim that "this formulation is one of the basic psychoanalytic tenets" recalls Freud's occasional lamentation that he was better served by his adversaries than by his acolytes. To avoid confounding the confusion visited upon this great man in his own name, I shall restrict myself to three summary statements about her use of Freud and then pass to the gist of Miss Eiduson's comments:

(1) The appeal to authority, whether named Freud or something else, was long ago ruled out of court as a mode of settling intellectual issues. The claim that my thesis "runs in the face of Freud's postulation" —even if true—is irrelevant to its validity.

(2) It is not true that Freud "postulated" an "antagonism" between pleasure and reality that was "eternally destined to remain so." His handling of the pleasure principle was mainly associated with his efforts to achieve a satisfactory formulation of the death-wish. Miss Eiduson's transposition of this problem in individual psychopathology to a "postulation" in social psychology (nowhere to be found in Freud's *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* or *Civilization and Its Discontents*) derives from her own free associations.

(3) Freud did depict an "antagonism" between pleasure and reality, but this did not figure for him as a "basic psychoanalytic tenet." It was one among many tests of a patient's handling of reality that provided the analyst with a clue to his pathology. Surely, reality in this clinical sense is not some global entity that has its own autonomous "eternal destiny," but is rather a set of estimates by which an individual guides his behavior toward his personal environment.

The global social reality of nineteenth-century Europe that Freud so brilliantly observed was quite different from the reality that environs twentieth-century Americans. Behavior that might then have spelled pathology may now be rational and normal. This is notably the case with respect to the availability of pleasure. In today's America, which regularly satisfies more desires for more people, pathology may rather lie in following behavioral codes routinized in a European tradition of scarcity.

The central point of my article was that current American reality—in J. K. Galbraith's shorthand, "the affluent society"—is *less antagonistic* to the pleasure principle than any previous reality recorded in history. Americans today can, and do, live by the postulates of "comfort and fun" without paying the heavy psychic costs of guilt and shame traditionally levied upon hedonism by the more stringent reality of previous epochs. This is so important, if true, that its consequences must be investigated with full intellectual candor and empirical detail.

We get nowhere by observing the operations of a genuinely new morality through the optic of an older, possibly obsolescent, moral doctrine. Such a procedure only confirms an existing astigmatism. Thus, David Riesman's inquiry into "other-direction" as a new behavioral code was promptly misconstrued as proof of current American *im*morality. Riesman's heroic effort to disengage the moral ideal of "autonomy" from its historical correlates was simply lost on commentators more intent on swearing loyalty oaths to the traditional morality than on investigating the new morality. This seems to be Miss Eiduson's case, with the special concern for preserving her version of psychoanalytic doctrine as an extra fillip.

Her case can better be put more modestly, more inquiringly—without casting Freud in the posture of a dogmatic prophet. What she asks is whether this new morality really is possible. Can people live by the guidance of "comfort and fun" without going wrong? This is a legitimate question, which can be variously formulated. If hedonism today costs less guilt and shame, does it not cost more anxiety? Evidently not, according to Miss Eiduson. Even in her own chosen example, installment buying, she finds that Americans today acquire pleasure without sufficient retribution in heavy psychic costs.



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What worries Miss Eiduson is precisely the absence of psychopathology where, in her view, it ought to prevail: "But now the culture encourages the individual in his demands for pleasure. . . . And man, unwittingly, basks and relaxes in the assured providential nature of society. It cannot be accidental that there is little pervasive concern among the credit buyers about the amount of their indebtedness. They appear neither worried nor indifferent about being mortgaged to the hilt." She is fearful to see people "bask and relax" in the belief that society is "providential" because her own view of reality is infused with the ancient forebodings of doom. Note the regularity of her own anxious symbolizations: "the inflexibility and coldness of reality," "reality's rigidity and implacability," "the inflexible reality."

Miss Eiduson's commentary fails to become a critique because at no point does she confront her fearful judgments by the question raised in my article: "Would those who scorn 'consumer mentality' also prefer less real consumption? It is quite possible that we cannot have our kind of society without some version of fun morality."

This large social question—With what sort of reality do we, as living Americans, have to deal?—is only obscured by Miss Eiduson's dubious analogy between regressive infantilism and credit buying. Here an issue of fact might have been posed that would provide valuable research guidance for behavioral scientists. Is the new moral code of "comfort and fun," as Miss Eiduson indicates, an escape hatch for repressed infantilism that leads only to the new trap of overdependence on the illusory beneficence of society? Or does the new morality, as I believe, promise genuine liberation from the "constrictive self" imposed by scarcity centuries and, with the extension of affluence, may it even enrich personal conscience by interplay with social conscience?

But Miss Eiduson is so convinced of her own ultimate knowledge of "the very life processes of man" that she regards empirical research with suspicion. Her enigmatic final sentence either means nothing or it means this. Thus, with a girlish guile, she taxes me with taking "too much pleasure in the mysteries, doubts and uncertainties of what *is*. . . ." I mentioned no mysteries, but Miss Eiduson might do well to bestow more than her passing contempt upon the doubts and uncertainties that I share with distinguished members of her own psychoanalytic fraternity.

These uncertainties are crucial in any extrapolation from current American reality to the shape of the American future. I underscored my doubts regarding facile inferences from the work of such learned and judicious men as Toynbee, Father LaFarge and Riesman. I did not think it necessary to show that a rigid (not rigorous) interpretation of Freud could be made that would obscure his theory and block further inquiry. Miss Eiduson now offers such an interpretation. She errs in scientific morality by invoking her master's name for a case he never made; she errs in scientific technique by transposing a hypothesis of individual pathology into a "postulation" of social psychology without offering a shred of evidence that this is more than an allegory.

I think Miss Eiduson's fearfulness about the American future is faulty—an outcome of her preferences rather than her observations. I think that the new morality of "comfort and fun" has brought us to a psychic threshold more promising for spiritual growth than decay. I think the mass media have played an indispensable role in this evolution, and that our characterological future may hinge upon their performance. But these are matters for inquiry rather than polemic. So again I conclude: "I think; but who, as yet, knows?"

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